

ZOMBIES

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ON SET

THE
**WALKING
DEAD**
SEASON 6



THE
66

GREATEST
ZOMBIE
MOVIES EVER

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO **THE UNDEAD**

148 PAGES OF INTERVIEWS, PREVIEWS, SET ACCESS, QUIZZES AND MORE



**SHAUN OF
THE DEAD**



**PRIDE & PREJUDICE
& ZOMBIES**



**28 DAYS
LATER**

ALSO INSIDE ZOMBIELAND ||| GREG NICOTERO ||| RESIDENT EVIL ||| GEORGE ROMERO ||| THE RETURNED

THE AMERICAN HORROR PROJECT



THREE UNIQUE SLICES OF THE AMERICAN NIGHTMARE
THE WITCH WHO CAME FROM THE SEA, MALATESTA'S
CARNIVAL OF BLOOD AND THE PREMONITION

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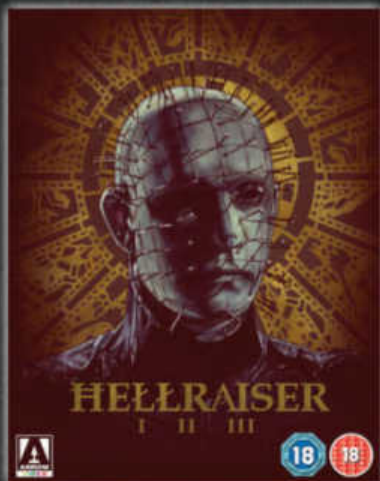
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WELCOME

Lurch inside for the ultimate celebration of the undead! Within these pages you'll find us shambling around the sets of some of the most influential zombie movies ever – from *Shaun Of The Dead* and *28 Days Later* to the upcoming *Pride And Prejudice And Zombies* and of course the king of zombie TV shows *The Walking Dead* (we've got the scoop on the horrors season six has in store). Want more gore? Check out the 66 best zombie movies ever made. How many have you seen? Plus: videogames, board games, zombie events, quizzes, the obligatory interview with George Romero – we've got 'em all!

It really is a dead good read...





42

THE WALKING DEAD

A sneak peek behind the scenes of season six of *The Walking Dead*, packed with interviews, insights and all the gory details!

44



64



41

50



63



13

THE 66 GREATEST ZOMBIE FILMS

Our definitive countdown of the best, grossest, bizarrest and most influential zombie movies ever!



56

60

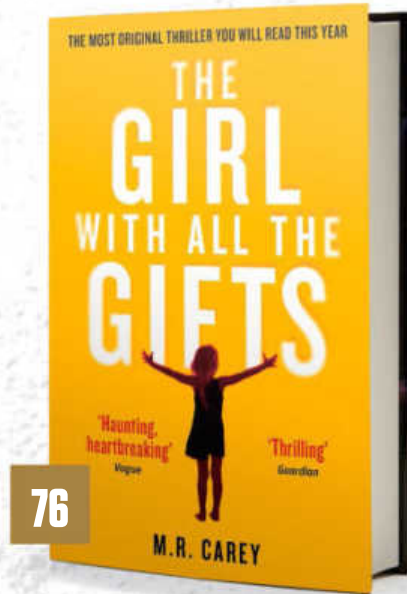
ZOMBIE TV

They're taking over your telly too: we check out *Dead Set*, *iZombie*, *The Returned* and *In The Flesh*, and somehow manage to survive.



CONTENTS

ZOMBIES THE ULTIMATE CELEBRATION



76

ON SET SPECIAL

We get up close and personal with the zombies of *Resident Evil*, *28 Days Later*, *Shaun Of The Dead* and *Land Of The Dead*. We even play a zombie!

93



122

ROMERO

From the archives, a classic interview with the king of the zombies – plus George A. Romero's *Dead* series broken down by numbers!



70

98



110



128

ZOMBIELAND

We chat with the writers of the 2009 zom-com and learn the rules of how to make a revolutionary zombie movie without getting bitten!

82

NEW MOVIES

Pride And Prejudice And Zombies, *Cell*, *Nina Forever*, *The Girl With All The Gifts*, *Patient Zero* and more! Your complete preview of upcoming films.

OPINION

08 Author and lecturer Allen Stroud on the place of the zombie in monster-lore.

86 Author David Towsey on sympathetic zombies and what makes them loveable.

126 Author R.R. Haywood on the fascination with zombies and why it's a good thing.

EXTRAS

136 Learn to fight zombies with these top real-life undead experiences.

138 Shoot 'em up! Our top ten zombie videogames.



137

139

140 Table top terror! The best zombie board games around.

144 Know your zombies! Pit your wits in our quiz.

146 Zombie-proof your home!





DEAD

and loving it

Author and Course Leader of the Film And TV Production and Creative Writing For Publication degrees at Buckinghamshire New University, **Allen Stroud**, explores our lifelong love affair with the living dead.

W

e have a healthy obsession with monsters, one that usually keeps us from frequenting dark alleys on our own, saying names three times in mirrors, sleeping in coffins and electrocuting the dead, but the zombie has a particularly special place in the fluttering hearts of horror fans.

Since George Romero introduced us to this particular form of shambling corpse back in 1968 with his film *Night Of The Living Dead*, we've seen the zombie appear in movies, TV series, books, board games, wargames, comics and conventions. Encounters range from comic to terrifying; there's something enduring about watching a mindless corpse shuffling towards you, intent on devouring human flesh.

Good monsters are a twisted reflection of our own human condition. There is a memory of life in the zombie, its motive made all the more terrible owing to its inability to see the ultimate end of its undying hunger. When all the world become zombies, what is left to sate the hunger of the dead? At least vampires are selective predators and the bite of a werewolf may transform you into a raging monster, but you get to be strong and powerful. There's not much upgrading when you get turned zombie.

We teach horror writing at Buckinghamshire New University. The rules of writing a good horror story involve the narrowing of the narrative. Our viewpoint character makes decisions that turn out bad and is gradually 'boxed in' until they have few choices and become a plaything of fate and/or the monster. When zombies are involved, this process is particularly harrowing as our monster of choice is weak and pathetic; a broken ruin of

its living self, left to stumble towards a potential victim motivated only by its hunger. If you're caught by a zombie, the struggle is made all the worse by your enemy's weakness. Most gather in packs, are infectious and once you turn, you can't come back.

When the human struggle for survival is at its most pitiful is when it scares us most. Zombies provide that moment when desperate characters are brought down by sheer numbers, submerged and bitten by a mindless supernatural horde only to rise again as one of the monsters they fought so hard to get away from.

The development of the zombie as a modern monster is something of a twisted path. The word 'zombie' is similar to words from the →



Zombies representing brain-dead consumers in *Dawn Of The Dead*.



Kenneth Branagh gets to know the downsides of being Frankenstein.



28 Days Later... still got that hangover.

Kongo language ‘nzambi’, ‘god’ and ‘zumbi’. Some ideas are drawn from the animated dead of Haitian rural folklore, where sorcerers animated servants with ‘no will of their own’. Older references come from the epic tales of Gilgamesh – “and I will let the dead go up and eat the living” – and the Bible Zechariah 14:12: “And the lord will send a plague on all the nations that fought against Jerusalem. Their people will be like walking corpses, their flesh rotting away.”

However, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* introduces us to the most famous of the animated dead. The monster made by Doctor Frankenstein is more sentient than our crowds of infectious shamblers, but comes from the similar stock in being a reanimated man. When Frankenstein’s monster demonstrates intelligence, this provides a rationale for his actions. With zombies we see a memory of what they were, a poor corrupted reflection of what we are and if we’re not careful, what we might

become. Well-written zombie stories play with the mysterious memory of humanity. It’s important that we and the surviving characters are conflicted over what to do. Maybe their zombified loved ones can be saved? *The Walking Dead* (2010) gets this right from the start with survivor Morgan Jones’ wife, Jenny (for more on *The Walking Dead* head to p44).

Undead monsters in stories build on the legacy that went before them. The most obvious example of this is the vampire and archetype baggage a writer has to contend with when writing a new vampire story. Write up a list of vampire weaknesses, idiosyncrasies and other traits vampires have and you’ll find you’ve got quite a lot to contend with. If you introduce



zombies, they don’t come with quite as many suitcases, but you still have a fair bit to deal with. However, there’s an advantage to this. Readers have an image of your monster already and will assume you’re working within these parameters, unless you challenge them – sparkly vampires anyone?

French theorist Roland Barthes identified this process as the referential code – the way in which we let the images of one story fill in the gaps of another. Imagine a space battle and you see *Star Wars* (1977), etc. The code works for most genres of writing. You can apply it equally to Jane Austen romance and zombie stories. Or even, as in the case of *Pride And Prejudice And Zombies* (see p70 for more), both at the same time.

That said, identikit horror on its own doesn’t get as far as good writing allied with these memorable tropes. A good writer makes use of the reader’s expectations, fulfilling and confounding them at the same time.

Zombies become interesting when writers

“The rotting and mouldy nature of the zombie means we’re unlikely to see many stories where they become heroes or protagonists”

play around with their context. The strangely balletic fight between a shark and a zombie in Lucio Fulci's 1979 film (*Zombie Flesh Eaters*) might not fit in with Romero's vision of the stumbling dead, but there is something weird about watching these two creatures try to eat each other.

Modern horror and fantasy writer John Hornor Jacobs has an excellent Wild West fantasy called *Heaven Of Animals* in the Newcon Press anthology *Legends II* (2015), where zombies are treated like cattle herds and guided by brave horsemen towards their destruction in huge threshing machines.

Other variations on the zombie include the *28 Days Later* (2002) depiction where director Danny Boyle decided to make his monsters feral, rabid and fast moving (head to p98 for more on this). Eschewing Romero's instruction to his cast to "do your best dead", the animalistic predator qualities of Boyle's zombies are emphasised by their energetic pursuit of the film's central characters and their flagrant disregard for self-preservation.

Our appetite for monsters is insatiable. Countless bestiaries have been written about creatures lurking in the shadows from fairy tales and ancient legend. *Dungeons & Dragons* (1977) gathered together hundreds of monster archetypes, setting out generic attributes for each drawn from their mythological origins. The various iterations of their monster manuals formed a blueprint for writers in the '70s, '80s and '90s and gradually became part of the reader's expectation.

In the pantheon of horror monsters, the zombie sits at the bottom of the hierarchy of the animated dead – corpses given life. These poor wretches are characterised by their mindlessness. Usually they are the tools of an evil master who created them, or the byproduct of contagious disease and/or mutation.

Climbing the corporate ladder of the undead isn't an easy task and usually requires our shambler to regain or retain some part of their humanity, achieving sentience and independence. This might offer a zombie a chance of redemption, but more often than not it doesn't. In many stories the writer decides any kind of recovery for the mindless undead isn't possible. The basic principle of what makes a zombie horrific is our inability to know how much of their former life they retain.

The popular boardgame *Zombicide* (2008) describes its own hierarchy of mindless corpses. In the first edition you have Walkers, Runners, Fatties and Abominations. In the season three expansion you get Crawlers and Seekers. Each type has its own strengths and weaknesses, but all act as an implacable horde for the players to shoot and run from as they work together to achieve a mission objective.

Similarly, there are many popular zombie computer games which cast the living dead in their familiar roles as infectious stumbling predators throughout the landscape. *The Walking Dead* is recreated as a game (*The Walking Dead*:

HIERARCHY OF THE UNDEAD

MUMMY

Sentient and powerful entombed dead Egyptian royalty.

BANSHEE

An intelligent/semi-intelligent spirit capable of a tremendous scream that heralds someone's imminent death.

GHOST

An intelligent incorporeal spirit usually bound to haunt a location, like a house or other building.

LICH

Sorcerers who have bound their souls into a jar (phylactery) and live on after death in the decayed remains of their body.

VAMPIRE

Intelligent undead who drink the blood of the living, hate sunlight, etc.

SPECTRE

Powerful incorporeal spirits who haunt desolate places.

WRAITH

Incorporeal spirits, known for their glowing eyes and hunger for the souls of the living.

WIGHT

Sentient graveyard lurkers who drain life from the living and eat the flesh of the dead.

GHOUL

Feral, fast moving cannibals who feed on the living.

REVENANT

Sentient summoned dead brought back until they can complete a task.

SKELETON

Animated dead soldiers, created by necromancy.

ZOMBIE

Mindless animated dead corpses, the product of disease, mutation or necromancy.

The Game), *Left 4 Dead* (2008) is pure adrenaline rush survival play and the most interesting of them all, *Day Z* (2012) lets you roam around a vast sandbox and see achievement in the mundanities of staying alive in a hostile dystopia world (for more zombie games head to p140).

The rotting and mouldy nature of the zombie means we're unlikely to see many stories where they become heroes or protagonists, but the exception remains to prove the rule [more on this on page 86]. The romantic comedy, *Warm Bodies* (2013) plays with the archetype. Nicholas Hoult's character R develops more sentience than your average animated undead and falls in love with

Julie Grigio after eating the brains of her boyfriend. This draws on Egyptian mythology of memories being absorbed by eating the minds of the dead and the fixed settings (in an airport and a baseball stadium) harks back to George Romero's *Dawn Of The Dead* (1978) which was shot in a shopping mall where zombies browse the aisles in half-remembered instincts that satirise our own consumer habits.

It's clear there's something both attractive and repellent to us about the living dead. Whether its games, films, novels, comics or convention zombie walks, our fascination with this particular brand of undead shows no sign of abating. 🧟

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THE TOP

66

*ZOMBIE
FILMS*
OF ALL TIME



THE TOP 66 ZOMBIE FILMS OF ALL TIME

Hello, and welcome to our rundown of the best zombie films, in ascending order from 66 to 1. Why not a top 50? Well, because there are more than 50 zombie films worth watching – and 66 is only one numeral away from the Number Of The Beast! There are hundreds more zombie films out there of course, but we guarantee that every one of these has something about it that makes viewing a worthwhile use of your time.

What exactly constitutes a “zombie movie”? Every horror fan has their own prejudices on this front, and we’re no different. Frankenstein’s monster was created by stitching together dead body parts and reanimating them, so does that mean every *Frankenstein* movie is a zombie movie? Erm no, that’d be plain daft. Another burning question of modern times is this:

does *28 Days Later* count as a zombie movie, even though Danny Boyle’s “Infected” are fast-moving blighters and are (more importantly) *not actually dead*? We’ve plumped for yes, though we know that’ll be controversial with some. The simple fact is, *28 Days* feels like a zombie movie. Its stateside success was also largely responsible for a revival of the genre; it’s an important milestone in the history of zombie movies, so it would be churlish to leave it out.

Of course, once we allowed one Infected movie in, that opened the door for other brethren such as *[REC]* and *Mutants*, as well as efforts like *Nightmare City*. And for one reason or another, we’ve also had no option but to exclude some great films that others would consider to be zombie movies. See below for those that didn’t quite meet our exacting standards. All reviews by Ian Berriman, unless stated. Some were previously published in *SFX* or *Total Film*.

CLOSE, BUT NO CIGAR

ARE THESE PROPER ZOMBIE MOVIES? WE THINK NOT!

THE EVIL DEAD

Possibly a controversial decision this, but although some books consider Sam Raimi’s log cabin-plattering horror trilogy to be zombie movies, we don’t. Deadites aren’t zombies, damn it! They’re people (sometimes dead, but often living) who’ve been possessed by evil spirits – not the same thing at all! And sometimes it’s reversible. So they’re out of the running.



SLITHER

A difficult call, this one. When we spoke to author Seanan McGuire back in 2011, she named James Gunn’s 2006 horror flick as one of her favourite zombie films, but we always thought of it an alien-possession movie (even though 1986’s *Night Of The Creeps*, which it has an awful lot in common with, definitely *is* a zombie flick). Whichever way you slice it, it’s a whole lot of gross, goofy fun.



HAPPINESS OF THE KATAKURIS

This typically deranged effort from Japanese director Takashi Miike includes a scene where zombies take part in a musical dance number. Sadly, they don’t get much screen time, though. For similar reasons we also excluded films like *Night Of The Comet* (1984) – brilliant though it is, you might come away disappointed if you bought it expecting a film full of rampaging zombies.



CARNIVAL OF SOULS

One suspects that Herk Harvey’s low-budget 1962 indie classic, in which a young woman survives a car accident, and is then stalked by sinister figures, may well have been an influence on George Romero – but its pale-faced ghouls are not really zombies (to say more would spoil the film for those who haven’t seen it). If they were, it would definitely have made our top 10.



66

WARM BODIES

2013  DIRECTOR: JONATHAN LEVINE



Most sane people have had quite enough of *Twilight*.

So zom-rom-com *Warm Bodies*, where undead hottie Nicholas Hoult falls in love with feisty blonde Kristen Stewart-alike human Teresa Palmer, could easily have been a dead loss. As it turns out, Jonathan Levine's adaptation of Isaac Marion's good-natured novel is warm and witty(ish), a satirical riff on *Romeo And Juliet* (complete with balcony scene) for *The Walking Dead* generation.

So *Warm Bodies* is not the zombie *Twilight*. But it's not as cool as it should be either, lacking the spark and flair of Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* and the terror and scope of Frank Darabont's sprawling show. Like Hoult's late teen R, *Warm Bodies* is packed with potential that it's unable to properly communicate or utilise.

Certainly there's nothing wrong with the cast – delicate, doe-eyed Hoult groans and lollops with feeling, devoted to Palmer's capable, self-possessed Julie after he eats her boyfriend Dave Franco's brains and inherits his memories.

"Keep you safe," murmurs R, desperate to save her from his fellow lurchers, or worse still fodder for skeletal under-zombies, the Bonies.

Zombie romance has become something of a subgenre of its own – with *Deadheads* a kind of slacker-com romance, *Life After Beth* (see no 38) mumblecore relationship break-up zomcom and *Night Of The Living Deb*, a love vs the apocalypse indie though *Warm Bodies* is perhaps the most mainstream and therefore perhaps the riskiest of the lot. That it didn't quite make the traction people had expected, or spark a raft of similar off-shoots despite its likeable cast suggests the kids might not be ready for a zombie heartthrob. **Rosie Fletcher**

65

MUTANTS

2009  DIRECTOR: DAVID MORLET



Time was, the French didn't really do horror films. That's all changed over the last decade, with the likes of *Haute Tension*, *Frontier(s)* and the mind-scarring *Martyrs* flying a *tricolore* drenched in the red stuff.

This particular slice of Gallic gore is basically *Vingt-Huit Jours Plus Tard Encore*. A viral outbreak has decimated the population, turning people into pointy-toothed, fast-moving killers. The one beacon of hope is a military base known as NOAH. Make your way there (two-by-two or not) and maybe you can survive...

The opening moments, which present us with a possible protagonist only to suddenly bump them off, set a pattern: every time a new character is introduced, the egg timer starts ticking to their demise. This adds a sense of danger and unpredictability, but does rather leave you with no one to root for, other than the plucky Sonia.

The first act is adrenalinised and intriguing. It cheekily plays on the zombie cognoscent's expectations, too, replicating the airfield scene from Romero's *Dawn Of The Dead*, then giving it a twist. The winter setting allows for some attractive snowy vistas of the Picardy region.

Performances are strong – though since no-one gets a noteworthy line of dialogue, that's simply a matter of conveying fear or rage. And, much like its compatriots, *Mutants* has an unblinking gaze. Watching someone succumb to the infection is a grim, protracted business – alopecia, pissing blood and all – like observing someone in the last throes of terminal disease.

Sadly, once our heroine has hunkered down in a hospital to wait for help to arrive, it becomes clear that director David Morlet isn't going to add much to the template set in place by Danny Boyle.

64

ZEDER

1983  DIRECTOR: PUPU AVATI



Getting an eyeful of the Emperor's ding-a-ling is always a depressing experience, especially when you're absolutely convinced you're going to see some beautifully tailored robes. *Zeder* has a very good rep amongst connoisseurs of intelligent horror – unsurprisingly, since director Pupi Avati's 1976 *The House With Laughing Windows* is widely admired – but is something of a disappointment.

Our hero is Stefano, a novelist who discovers a strange essay written on the ribbon of an old typewriter. It discusses "K-zones", places that exist in a "zero time", where the dead can return to life. The fascinated writer's investigations eventually lead him to the grounds of a derelict holiday camp, the site of another K-zone, where an ex-priest has had himself buried.

If you're expecting zombie carnage, you'll be disappointed: only two people are seen coming back to life. *Zeder*'s more the sort of film where people sit in antique chairs spouting indigestible dialogue like "A demise isn't a treatable malady; it's a pure end, an absolute state reached by a total event, which is final and for good." Well, quite.

The elegantly cheekboned Gabriele Lavia makes a charismatic lead, there are some winningly eccentric supporting characters, and the scenes of the former priest's eventual revival are fleetingly creepy. But when your story takes the form of a lengthy investigation then the climax really needs to deliver. The main problem here is that we know from quite early in the film exactly what "K-zones" are, so when the finale arrives, all it inspires is a shrug of indifference.

A warning: should you try to track *Zeder* down on DVD, be careful not to purchase the US edit (released under the title *Revenge Of The Dead*), which is missing big chunks of the film.

63

BIO ZOMBIE

1998  DIRECTOR: WILSON YIP



Watching this spoofy Hong Kong effort may put you off Lucozade for life: bizarrely, its zombie outbreak kicks off via a sample of an Iraqi bioweapon stored in a bottle of the sugary energy drink. Whatever next? *Zombie Bovril*?

It's best summarised as *Mallrats* with zombies. Buddies Woody (Jordan Chan) and Bee (Sam Lee) run a small shop in the mall in question, selling dodgy DVDs. Not that they seem to do much actual business; they're much too busy flogging stolen cellphones or lamely trying to hit on the girls from the beauty parlour.

Like a novelty-tied office joker, *Bio Zombie* is zany with a capital Z. It sets out its stall during the opening credits, which begin as if you're sitting in a cinema, with people's heads obscuring the view and voices muttering, "How long is this?"

Our heroes are a right pair of losers, and quite quickly, as we follow their petty adventures, things become a little tiresome; after 45 minutes you're longing to see zombies arrive *en masse* and do their worst. When they do turn up, the make-ups are pretty dreadful, seemingly combining joke-shop wound kits with lots of talc.

Having said all this, *Bio Zombie* does contain quite a few decent gags, many of the visual kind: one sequence, where Woody and Bee are questioned separately by police, appears to be shot in split-screen, until the camera pulls back to reveal that it all took place while they were standing right next to each other!

The subtitles on the region one DVD release add further humour, thanks to their mangled take on English. Ever since watching *Bio Zombie*, we've been announcing a trip to the toilet with the words, "I want to stool now!"

62

WORLD WAR Z

2013  DIRECTOR: MARG FORSTER



Every zombie movie needs a hook: there's fast zombies and there's slow zombies. There's cockney zombies and Nazi zombies; zombies in shopping malls and zombies in space. *World War Z* has a lot of zombies.

New York turns dead-head in the first five minutes of Marc Forster's blockbuster horror and the mysterious virus responsible spreads quickly – seeing cities, countries and entire continents piled high with the running dead. Taking the multiple viewpoints of Max Brooks' bestselling novel and cramming them all into Brad Pitt, Forster's aerial view of the apocalypse might lack nuance but it more than makes up for it with scale.

Pitt is Gerry Lane, a former UN investigator who manages to pull his family out of Manhattan and nab them a precious bunk bed on America's last battleship. Called back into service by his old boss, Lane jets around the ruined earth to try and discover the original root of the plague.

Forster's zombies aren't really zombies at all, and they often look more like an angry football crowd on a Saturday night – but there's never been a more impressive horde of flesh-eaters on the big screen. Sprinting, gnashing, leaping and head-butting their way through civilisation in a swarm of thousands, the zombie apocalypse finally looks big enough to be believable.

Conspicuously bloodless, the PG-13 rating rears its family-friendly head whenever the camera gets too close for comfort, and a dumbed-down finale looks suspiciously like a scene from every zombie flick that's ever been.

The Hollywood blockbuster might have been a bit late to the zombie party, but it arrives exactly as everyone hoped and feared – hectic, deafening, empty but oh-so-spectacular. **Paul Bradshaw**

61

DANCE OF THE DEAD

2008  DIRECTOR: GREGG BISHOP

If *Zombieland* were Disneyworld, this indie horror-comedy shot in Georgia (the US state, that is, not the former Soviet republic) would be Alton Towers: a less high-profile, less expensive attraction, but one still well worth a visit.

Director Gregg Bishop first read Joe Ballarini's script way back in 1998, when the two were in film school together, but it was another decade before he managed to get the project off the ground. The pitch: John Hughes meets George Romero. On the eve of the prom, goo from a power station revives the dead at the nearby cemetery, who march on the local high school. A ragtag bunch of heroes must save the day. The stereotypes are instantly familiar – the geeks; the rockers; the hard case – but all possess sufficient personality to enable you warm to them, particularly the joker in the pack, pizza delivery boy Jimmy.

The film's low budget is glaringly obvious: the prom is under-populated, and the zombie apocalypse amounts to little more than a flipped-over car. You'll be too busy chuckling to grouse about this, though, thanks to Looney Tunes gore, some neat reversals (our heroes barricade themselves in a house, then discover it's a funeral home...), and batty dialogue ("I don't know how to shoot a machete!"). There are also some novel spins on the undead: the movie's zombies launch out of their graves as if they've been fired out of a cannon, and a couple of teens who were smooching when they were alive start to *eat each other's faces* after death.

Likeably goofy, *Dance Of The Dead* probably isn't a night you'll remember for the rest of your life, but while it lasts it's a blast.



From *Live And Let Die* to die and let live for Baron Samedi.

60

SUGAR HILL

1974  DIRECTOR: PAUL MASLANSKY

"If Sam Arkoff went out and had his cleaning lady write a movie, it couldn't have been any worse than this piece of junk they dropped on me. Everything was judged by Mrs Arkoff, who sat at home and ate chocolates and read paperbacks all her life." The acerbic assessment of the late actor Robert Quarry there, on *Sugar Hill* producer Samuel Z. Arkoff. Pay him no mind. The blaxploitation horror subgenre had a brief flowering in the mid-'70s, after the box office success of *Blacula* – and this zombie flick (shot in Houston, Texas) is one of the better examples.

Marki Bey plays Diane "Sugar" Hill, who swears vengeance on mob boss Morgan (Quarry) and his goons after her boyfriend gets beaten to death for refusing to sell his nightclub. Turning to an elderly voodoo priestess for help, Sugar soon has otherworldly aid in the form of top-hatted master of the dead

Baron Samedi (yes, him from *Live And Let Die*), and the zombies acting under his control.

Most of the film is given over to showing Morgan's lackeys getting their just desserts via a variety of gruesome methods. One is thrown to ravenous pigs; another's chucked in a coffin full of snakes; a third receives some very unwanted extras at the local massage parlour. But our favourite sequence sees one man attacked by a solitary chicken's foot, which hops up his leg and grabs him by the throat.

Admittedly, there isn't a lot more to the film than that. Sure, we see our afroed heroine using her feminine wiles to draw her nemesis to his doom, and Sugar's cop ex swotting up on voodoo as he investigates, but all that's just padding to fill the gaps between the killings, all of which are too absurd to alarm. The zombies look utterly ridiculous, mysteriously coated as they are in spray-on cobweb, with silver-painted ping-pong balls for eyes. No matter: as the gold-toothed, boggle-eyed Baron Samedi, Don Pedro Colley is memorably deranged; and repetitive though it may be, there's a great deal of satisfaction to be had in seeing the corpses of slaves sticking it to The Man, time and time again. Right on, brothers – we can dig it.



The zombies of *Sugar Hill* were in dire need of a feather duster...

59

OUTPOST

2008  DIRECTOR: STEVE BARKER



"Zombies", as Alan Partridge succinctly put it, "by their very nature are inconsistent." That's doubly true of the creatures in this low-budget British horror, which can't seem to make their minds up if they're zombies or ghosts.

Rome's Ray Stevenson heads a small squad of mercenaries paid to escort a businessman to a bunker in an Eastern European war-zone (actually Scotland). Inside, they discover the results of Nazi experiments to create unkillable super-soldiers. Well, it makes a change from dabbling with the occult, eh?

Put it down to morphic fields or great minds thinking alike, but *Outpost* was one of two Nazi-zombie flicks to emerge in the space of months (see also 48, *Dead Snow*). Fortunately, the sight of lumbering, rotten-faced stormtroopers never gets stale. Nor does wince-inducing ocular trauma, a video nasty staple that pops up more than once here. The mercenaries are characterised enough for you to take an interest in their fate – particularly a god-fearing Scot and his tormentor, a laconic hillbilly – and their military jargon has the ring of veracity.

Unfortunately, this is one of those films that's a very slow build to an anti-climax, and it doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Of course, logic is defenestrated as soon as you're dealing with the subject of Nazi zombies, but these ghouls can appear and disappear at will, substantial one moment and intangible the next. The script never comes up with a decent explanation as to why they fanny about for hours instead of slaughtering the squad straight away, and the mercenaries' continuing use of standard military procedures to combat them also looks a little ludicrous.

Still, faint praise is due: as Nazi zombie films go, *Outpost* is far superior to the likes of *Zombie Lake*.

58

BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR

1990  DIRECTOR: BRIAN YUZNA

Though set a mere eight months after the first film's demented Miskatonic massacre, it took five years for Brian Yuzna's *Re-Animator* sequel to bring fresh terror to the big screen. Taking its cues from episodes V and VI of HP Lovecraft's "Herbert West: Re-Animator" and James Whale's classic 1935 horror *Bride Of Frankenstein*, *Bride Of Re-Animator* is every bit the assault on good taste its predecessor was.

It begins with an opening gambit in the trenches of the Peruvian Civil War, where we find single-minded latter-day Prometheus Dr Herbert West (Jeffrey Combs) and his tormented partner Dr Dan Cain (Bruce Abbott) continuing their research into re-animating dead humans. Not just whole humans though, because West's latest breakthrough allows him to summon any limb or single piece of human tissue to startling life – which is fortunate because all Dan has left of his murdered girlfriend is her heart. And body parts are in ample supply when you set up shop next to a cemetery...

Building on *Re-Animator*'s outrageous creations, the team at KNB EFX out-weirded themselves with *Bride*, creating perverse dogs with human arms, unruly finger monsters and the titular patchwork princess.

Bride may repeat many of the first film's tricks – particularly the pathos that's milked from Dan's calamitously doomed love life – but the film capitalises on the popularity of West by expanding his role, with Combs better than ever as the frosty boffin. It's not the most accomplished zombie movie on this list, but *Bride*'s grotesque humour and truly stomach-churning body horror is deliriously entertaining – a marriage made in heaven. **Jordan Farley**



A massive gun and a hall of glass – what could go wrong?

57

RESIDENT EVIL

2002  DIRECTOR: PAUL WS ANDERSON

On games consoles, the *Resident Evil* series has enjoyed unparalleled critical and commercial success for a survival horror franchise since its debut a full 20 years ago. On the big screen, British writer/director Paul W. S. Anderson has replicated the "commercial success" bit, but at the cost of his name, which has become a punchbag for critics and trolls. The reason? Let's be honest, most of the movies are pants. But what many forget is that the first *Resident Evil* is a superior example of the modern action-horror. It's noisy, it's stupid, it's not even particularly faithful to the games, but boy is it fun.

Deep under the streets of Raccoon City, a viral outbreak in the Hive (the vile Umbrella Corporation's genetic research facility) has turned its staff into an army of rabid undead. Knowledge of this might have been useful to amnesiac Alice (Milla

Jovovich) and the commando group who seize her before heading below ground to investigate and disable the facility's rogue A.I., Red Queen. They succeed, but release the zombie hordes in the process. Their only hope for survival is their mysterious tag-along. Luckily for them, there's more to Alice than a body-hugging red dress.

Released just months before Danny Boyle's pioneering *28 Days Later*, *Resident Evil* is one of the last hurrahs for traditional slow, shambling dead heads. The make-up, effects work and performances of the human cast are among the best committed to the screen. Even the non-humans excel: the zombie dogs are truly terrifying, looking like their skins have turned inside out as they try to eat yours.

Slick cinematography, editing and camerawork give the film a pleasing big-budget aesthetic, bolstered by a great score – a collaboration between composer Marco Beltrami and goth-rocker Marilyn Manson. Its trump card, however, is Alice – one of the great kick-ass heroines of the past decade – which might explain the franchise's popularity, despite the questionable quality of the sequels. *Resident Evil* isn't high art, but sometimes seeing a piece of decaying flesh get shot in the face will do fine. **Jordan Farley**



Attempting to seduce the zombies is not the way forward, Alice!

56

PET SEMATARY

1989  DIRECTOR: MARY LAMBERT

Stephen King movies can be a bit hit and miss. Some turn out well, like *The Shining*, others... not so well (yes, we're looking at you, *The Mangler*). This adaptation of King's 1983 novel falls somewhere in the middle.

It's one of those horrors where the characters' stupidity rapidly exhausts your reserves of patience. Dale Midkiff plays Louis Creed, whose family move into a new home by a busy highway. When his daughter's kitty gets mown down by a truck, neighbour Jed (Fred Gwynne, a man who's surely heard more than his fair share of "Why the long face?" gags) takes him to the Indian burial ground (isn't it always?) behind the nearby pet cemetery (the local kids can't spell, y'see). One interment later and the cat is magically resurrected – but returns with an evil temperament...

From here on in, it's blindingly obvious how events will play out – Creed's young son Gage practically has "doomed" stencilled on his forehead. Director Mary Lambert undeniably has flair, but there's a surfeit of dry-ice mist and cat-leaps-out scares, and the performances she coaxes from her cast are hilariously overwrought – when a toddler's death inspires guffaws, something's seriously wrong. Louis's persistent dunderheadedness is maddening, and a subplot about his wife's guilt over the death of her sister from spinal meningitis toys with the idea of disability as monstrosity, leaving a bad taste in the mouth.

However, as soon as little Gage meets his inevitable fate, the movie shifts up a couple of gears. Merrily slashing people in the Achilles heel with a scalpel, giggling like a wind-up toy clown, the reanimated rugrat makes Damien Thorn look positively cuddlesome. Once watched, the words "I brought you something, mommy!" will forever hold a sinister charge.



55

SHOCK WAVES

1977  DIRECTOR: KEN WIEDERHORN

Shock Waves didn't come up with the idea of combining the undead and the Third Reich (see 1943's *Revenge Of The Zombies* and 1966's *The Frozen Dead* for proof), but it did inspire a minor wave, with Eurotrash directors Jesus "Jess" Franco and Jean Rollin getting in on the Nazi-zombies act (with *Oasis Of The Zombies* and *Zombie Lake* respectively).

The main thing that *Shock Waves* has going for it is the presence of Peter Cushing as an aged former SS officer. Cushing never turned in a performance that wasn't worth watching, and that truism holds good here, even though his role basically consists of delivering the exposition and barking out Germanic clichés. He's the only inhabitant of a small island on which a group of tourists have been shipwrecked – well, apart from a unit of indestructible stormtroopers named *Der Toten Korps*.

These begoggled figures provide many eerie moments as they rise up from the waves. They also do a lot of lying about in rock pools and ponds, which makes for some startling surprises, but doesn't seem like the most effective military strategy in the world. Their other strength is omnipresence: no matter which direction our heroes run in, the undead supersoldiers somehow always get there first to lurk beneath the surface in wait...

Sadly, at times when Cushing's off the screen and the zombies aren't rising from the depths or standing silhouetted against the horizon, *Shock Waves* is a bit of a drag. It has plenty of atmosphere – to which the score, with its mournful siren wails, makes a considerable contribution – but doesn't have any notion of what to do with its single great idea, beyond a deadly game of hide and seek.



It's fair to say the hen night had been heavy: *The Serpent And The Rainbow*.



54

THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW

1988  DIRECTOR: WES CRAVEN

After two decades of Romero-style zombies, Wes Craven took the genre back to the world of voodoo, from whence it originally sprang. Cleverly, *The Serpent And The Rainbow* takes a have-cake-and-eat-it approach, incorporating living dead elements via dreams and hallucinations.

The film takes its name from anthropologist Wade Davis's 1985 non-fiction book, in which he visited Haiti to investigate how malevolent voodoo practitioners went about "zombifying" their victims. Davis concluded they used powders including tetrodotoxin, a paralysing biotoxin found in pufferfish as well as certain toads, to cause the appearance of death. After the victims woke in their coffins, beatings and doses of hallucinogenic plant *Datura stramonium* were used to convince them they'd had their souls stolen.

Bill Pullman plays Harvard anthropologist Dennis Alan, who travels to Haiti to investigate the "zombie powder" in the hope that it can form the basis of a revolutionary new anaesthetic. Unfortunately, this

soon puts him on a collision course with the government's ruthless paramilitary force, the Tonton Macoutes. Refusing to be deflected, Alan is subjected to nail-through-scrotum torture, framed for murder, and ultimately buried alive.

Filming began in Haiti, nine months after a revolution overthrew corrupt former-president Jean-Claude Duvalier. Craven went to the most powerful voodoo priest on the island seeking help and protection – in return he had to visit a Beverly Hills jeweller to buy gold chains for use in ceremonies!

Filming later switched to the Dominican Republic, so judging what was shot where is hard. Regardless, the travelogue aspects are fascinating. We're taken into bustling streets crowded with extras, and witness cockfights, voodoo ceremonies and glass-eating performances. As you might expect from the man who brought us *Nightmare On Elm Street*, the dream sequences are particularly potent – in one, a snake leaps out of the mouth of a desiccated zombie sorceress; in another, Alan is trapped in a coffin rapidly filling with blood.

The way Craven weaves real-life events (and genuine news footage) into a sensationalist B-movie may leave you feeling uncomfortable, though. Isn't stirring the Tonton Macoutes into a fantastical tale such as this, featuring a sorcerer who stores human souls in jars and can enter people's dreams (remind you of anyone?), in bad taste? Still, that never stopped anyone using the Nazis as fantasy-film bogeymen, did it?

53

THE RETURNED

2004  DIRECTOR: ROBIN CAMPILLO

Adapted as the TV show *The Returned*, this arthouse effort (released *en Français* as *Les Revenants*) is completely free of exploding heads and brain-feasting. Instead, it makes metaphorical use of the living dead, in order to look at how we deal with grief.

One day, millions of people who died within the last ten years suddenly come back. A small town acts as a microcosm, as its people struggle with the logistical problems and emotional issues presented by their 13,000 “returnees”. They come back not in the form of rotting corpses smeared in graveyard dirt, but smartly dressed and impeccably coiffured. In an interview with filmmaker Baris Azman (tinyurl.com/barisazman), debutant director Robin Campillo explained, “We wanted the dead



Putting scruffy zombies to shame: the returned dead in *The Returned*.

people just to be like photographs of themselves – the memory of them actually coming back.”

Campillo says that he was trying to recreate the sensations he experienced when two friends died within the space of a month. For a while, he felt that they were still present; after a time, he was able to let them go. Clinging onto deceased loved ones, it’s implied here, is destructive. The dead can discuss the past, but not the future; the living must look forward in order to be truly alive. The film symbolises this neatly

in a closing image, as a woman wipes condensation from her mirror; finally emerging from the fog of grief, she can see herself again.

But there are other facets to the way in which the returned dead are portrayed in *They Came Back*. They’re treated, much like refugees or illegal immigrants, as second-class citizens (the *socially* dead); and since 65% are over 40 and all of them display “a lack of synchronism with reality” (as if in a perpetual state of having walked into the kitchen and forgotten what they went in for...), the film also toys with



the contemporary issue of Western society’s ageing population.

A mystery slowly builds as it’s discovered that the dead are congregating at night for reasons unknown, but *They Came Back* is not overly concerned with narrative thrust. It takes a cool, non-sensational approach; even when parents are being reunited with a dead child, or a woman is steeling herself to kiss her dead lover, Campillo resists letting the film slip into melodrama. You may find that restraint frustrating – or consider it a refreshing change.

52

THE WALKING DEAD

1936  DIRECTOR: MICHAEL CURTIZ

If you reckoned Bub, the partially domesticated zombie from *Day Of The Dead* (see 11) was the most sympathetic zombie character ever, or even the titular shambler of *Fido* (see 33), then think again; he’s eclipsed by *The Walking Dead*’s John Ellman (or if you prefer, John *Elman* – we see the name spelt both ways on screen at different times!). It’s also the only film we can think of that sees an undead pianist tinkling the ivories.

This unusual effort from the director who later went on to helm the likes of *Casablanca* and *The Adventures Of Robin Hood* is part *Frankenstein*, part crime drama. Framed for the murder of a judge, former con Ellman (Boris Karloff) is executed, despite the existence of a



Boris Karloff’s mother never told him it was rude to stare.

pair of eyewitnesses who could easily clear his name, but are too frightened of reprisals to step forward and provide their evidence. Fortunately, they both happen to work for a doctor who’s just mastered the secret of reanimating the dead using a mechanical heart...

Once revived, Ellman returns from the other side knowing exactly what has happened to him, becoming “the instrument of some supernatural power” as he confronts those responsible for sending him to the electric chair.

As you’ve probably ascertained by now, the plot is incredibly contrived in every detail. The best approach is simply not to think about it – otherwise you might wonder why, for example, Ellman never bothers to mention the fact that a man *paid* him to keep watch on the judge’s house in his defence.

Boris Karloff is excellent in the central role. He imbues the noble, pathetic Ellman with considerable pathos, yet at the same time his baleful glare sends a shiver down your spine; only Bela Lugosi’s Murder



© KOBAL (2)

Legendre (see 40) might defeat him in a world championship stare-off.

Interestingly, Ellman never actually *kills* anyone – his sinister presence simply causes people to, say, trip over and shoot themselves, or have a heart attack and fall out of a window. It’s like watching *Final Destination* spliced with *You’ve Been Framed*!

The initial script had Ellman return as a savage killer, but Karloff lobbied successfully to make him a sympathetic character throughout. He was quite right to do so; the results are far more unusual and memorable.



Jumper-wearing undead loverman Hugh, in *Neither The Sea Nor The Sand*.

51

NEITHER THE SEA NOR THE SAND

1972 DIRECTOR: FRED BURNLEY

Gore fans, be warned: this '70s oddity may have you choking back the sick, but probably not in the way you were hoping for. Produced by Tigon, the British horror specialists behind the likes of *Witchfinder General* and *Blood On Satan's Claw*, it's a zombie romance boasting an atmosphere thick with British miserablism.

Susan Hampshire plays Anna, a married woman who falls for Hugh (Michael Petrovitch) during a visit to Jersey. The lovers subsequently take a trip to Scotland, where Hugh suffers a heart attack on the beach. He's pronounced dead on the scene, but returns to their cottage hours later, inexplicably reanimated by the power of Susan's love...

It's the dialogue that makes the film so initially unpalatable. Hugh, a Land Rover-driving, sturdy jumper-

wearing take on your typical Mills & Boon brooding male, has a penchant for pretentious pronouncements such as "Everything is real – reality is total". Exchanges such as "Been waiting long?" "A lifetime!" may have you hurling shoes at the screen.

Rosemary Davies, credited for "additional dialogue", could well be the individual to pin the blame on in this regard. The film was based on a novel by Gordon Honeycombe, a one-time newsreader for ITN.

Despite its failings, the film has something about it. For the most part, the post-mortem Hugh doesn't look all that different – most of us look rougher after a night at the pub – but once he acquires jet-black eyes, he cuts a chilling figure. Susan's behaviour becomes increasingly disturbing as she scales the heights of denial. And while it does so in a rather buttoned-up way, *Neither The Sea Nor The Sand* does flirt with taboos: in the most memorable sequence, Susan sheds her dressing gown in front of her undead beloved and reclines on the bed in her nightie. The director discreetly draws a veil over proceedings, fading to black and resisting the urge to cut to a train entering a tunnel, but the implication is clear, leaving your mind reeling as you speculate on the practicalities...



Another woman falls prey to that ridiculous knitwear.

50

TOKYO ZOMBIE

2005 DIRECTOR: SAKICHI SATO

If Reeves and Mortimer took on the undead, the results might look a little like this oddball Japanese effort, based on a manga by Yusaku Hanakuma, and written/directed by the man who scripted Takashi Miike's shockingly bloody *Ichi The Killer*. It certainly shares the comedy duo's love of slapstick violence, as we see people walloped with a fire extinguisher, spanked with a spade, or having their head kicked off like a rugby ball! Vic and Bob would also surely approve of the memorably coiffured central pairing of Fujio, a slapheaded Ju-Jitsu obsessive, and Mitsuo, his idiotic, Afroed sidekick. Another good comparison point is afterlife black comedy *Wristcutters*; like that film, *Tokyo Zombie* manages to wring offbeat humour from the bleakest of subject matter.

Tokyo Zombie is nothing if not a film of two halves. In the first, we see the zombie apocalypse kick off – but our heroes don't seem all that cut up about it, and are farcically useless at dealing with the situation. Next, the movie makes an audacious leap forward: five years into the future, in a safe enclave, wealthy housewives stave off boredom by watching zombies and wrestlers fight to the death in a gladiatorial arena.

Unpredictability is a rare commodity in a genre that's overcrowded with unimaginative knockoffs, and *Tokyo Zombie*'s main strength is that it's full of surprises – not all of them tasteful. It's the sort of film in which an old man's first reaction to discovering the corpse of a schoolgirl is to lift up her skirt for a sneaky peek. Nothing is off-limits here, whether it's child abuse, cancer, or repeated use of the word "retard". Yet despite, or perhaps because of this, it remains totally charming.



49

LA HORDE

2009 DIRECTORS: YANNICK DAHAN & BENJAMIN ROCHER

La Horde is one of those films that's so laced with testosterone that it wouldn't be too surprising if, once the lights came up, the audience discovered they'd all grown beards.

It all takes place in and around a decrepit Parisian tower block that's the base of operations for a gang of criminals. A team of cops visit the building, bent on exacting extra-judicial punishment for the death of a colleague. Then the advent of a zombie apocalypse (of the kind so speedy it makes *28 Days Later*'s Infected look like tortoises) forces the two sides to join forces in the struggle for survival.

It's been summarised as "*Die Hard* with zombies", though first-time directors Yannick Dahan and Benjamin Rocher's description – "*Conan* in a flat" – is more intriguing. Dahan and Rocher's aims were to create a film with strong production values and "tough, badass" characters, one which reflected their love of '80s action flicks. They succeeded on all these fronts, but the results are a little one-note, particularly if you have a limited appetite for shouting, machine-gunning and hard-man scowling.

Pregnant cop Aurore, the appointed Final Girl, is a welcome oasis of femininity amid the scowling machismo – although she has *cajones* to match those of her male colleagues.

As a debut effort it's undoubtedly impressive, and if it's hyperbolic violence you want, *La Horde* delivers it in spades. No surface is left clean of blood splatters as our heroes work their way down to ground level in an orgy of stabbing, battering and shooting. Mind you, you can't help thinking that if they remembered to point their hand-cannons at head height it'd all be over a hell of a lot more quickly...



48

DEAD SNOW

2009  DIRECTOR: TOMMY WIRKOLA



Norway isn't a nation you readily associate with horror, and with good reason: in the words of Tommy Wirkola, writer/director of *Dead Snow*, "Norwegian cinema has always been kind of boring, really serious films." With this, the country's first zombie flick, Wirkola aimed to change that, by homaging the '80s horrors that he loved growing up.

As a bunch of medical students party in a cabin, we're treated to a string of familiar tropes. There's a "gatekeeper" figure, of course – the grizzled local who fills in the backstory regarding a German squadron from Norway's years of Nazi occupation who disappeared, never to be seen again. Engage in casual sex and you get punished, and "dead" bodies rise up in the back of shot. None of this is necessarily a problem – as every cliché hoves into view, fans of *The Evil Dead* and *Friday The 13th* will greet them like a much-loved old friend.

What makes *Dead Snow* fresh is the setting: its bad-taste blitzkrieg goes off against a stunning backdrop of snow-shrouded Norwegian mountains, and blood just looks more aesthetically pleasing splattered across the white stuff. The film gets better as it progresses, gathering momentum like a snowball rolling downhill. And Wirkola is a master of the whiplash-inducing gear change: just as you're starting to think that taking on zombie stormtroopers with a chainsaw looks like a lark, he snaps you out of your good humour quicker than a slap in the face with a leather glove.

A few nagging questions are left unanswered: for starters, how exactly did these soldiers become zombified in the first place? There's brief mention of a "curse", but beyond that the mystery is never delved into. However, this is a tiny grumble in the face of an avalanche of gruesome gore and sight gags.

47

DEAD HEAT

1988  DIRECTOR: MARK GOLDBLATT



It's not often you see a credit for "chicken animatronics" roll past, but *Dead Heat* isn't your average movie. The highlight of this zombie take on the buddy-cop genre, made by Roger Corman's New World Pictures, comes when the heroes are attacked by the contents of a Chinatown butchers. Yes, this film features zombie chickens...

Treat Williams plays Roger Mortis (groan...), an LAPD cop killed while investigating a series of armed robberies apparently carried out by the undead. Reanimated by his partner using the same tech, Mortis has 10-12 hours to close the case before he dissolves into "an organic stew".

You know those old movies where, unable to afford a famous actor, they hired a sibling (like the Bond spoof *Operation Kid Brother*, starring Neil Connery)? *Dead Heat* could be the screenwriter equivalent. Thanks to the wise-cracking, leather-blousoned Mortis, forever spitting zingers such as "You have the right to remain disgusting!" and "I gotta take a leak so bad, my teeth are floating!", the script feels like an own-brand version of something by *Lethal Weapon* scribe Shane Black. This makes sense when you discover it was written by Black's brother, Terry (Shane, incidentally, also cameos as a highway patrolman).

Dead Heat loses momentum in the last half hour as Black seemingly runs out of gags and concentrates on the plot – which doesn't make a jot of sense. But it remains a huge amount of fun – especially if you enjoy watching toughs battling away with machine guns, or gooey body-melting horror. Solid support by genre favourites Darren McGavin (star of *Kolchak*), Robert Picardo (*Voyager's* EMH), and a rather frail-looking Vincent Price provides further incentive to watch. But we had you at "zombie chickens", right?

46

VERSUS

2000  DIRECTOR: RYUHEI KITAMURA

Being cool is the greatest virtue. That's what so many people don't seem to understand. They can bang on about Gandhi, but did he wear wraparound shades and a leather trenchcoat? No, he wore a loincloth and specs. They lionise Mother Teresa, but did she ever spit out deadpan one-liners while firing a handgun, held sideways? No. She was rubbish. Looking cool is all that matters.

Which is something that the makers of this Japanese zombie flick understand. They know the score. Yakuza gangsters are cool. Black leather jackets are cool. Blank-eyed Yakuza in black leather jackets kicking the heads off zombies are really, really cool. Other cool things include: sexy hitwomen with dyed red hair; nonchalantly shooting people without even bothering to look in their direction; Harley Davidsons; not bothering to wipe away the blood decoratively splattered over your face.

You're probably thinking "Trenchcoats? Martial arts? This sounds like *The Matrix*!" But *Versus* doesn't cloak itself in a patchwork of trite philosophical references to try and con you that it's got half a brain. Why should it? Being dumb is cool, dude, and *Versus* is as knowingly dumb as a three-chord thrash by the Ramones. The plot? Something to do with a "gate to the other side", with the reincarnations of age-old enemies battling to open the gate, or keep it shut. Don't worry about it too much.

The film's only flaw is its length. Cool should never outstay its welcome. You need to get in there, pose like mad, then get the hell out of Dodge, and at two hours *Versus* is just a little overlong. All the same, this stylish, hyper-kinetic riot of ultraviolence is glacially cool. Watch it. It'll make you a cooler person.



45

[REC] 2

2009  DIRECTORS: JAUME BALAGUERÓ & PACO PLAZA

If you're a fan of the original *[REC]* (see 21), whether or not you'll be able to stomach this sequel isn't a matter of format – this is no *Blair Witch 2*, shrugging off its old skin to reveal a more conventional shape.

Proceeding immediately from the events of its predecessor, this follow-up to the Spanish not-really-zombies horror takes us back into the apartment building that's the centre of a viral outbreak, once again deploying found-footage trickery to foster a sense of verisimilitude. Those techniques – hand-held camerawork, temporary sound drop-outs, intermittent freezing or distortion of the image – work just as well second time around, and with its slow build-ups of tension followed by sudden bursts of hyper-violence, *[REC] 2* has all the raw immediacy of its forebear. Only a sequence featuring a helmet-cam view is a questionable choice, momentarily making you feel like you've been dropped into a game of *Doom*. Ironically, a technique developed to make videogames feel more immersive now has the opposite effect; feeling overly fictional, it rudely yanks you out of the moment.

No, acceptance depends on whether you welcome the broadening out of the franchise's mythology, which makes it even more dubious to classify the *[REC]* films as a zombie series. The mysteriousness of the infection was part of the original's appeal. Here, its exact nature is laid out in unambiguous terms, in a film that arguably has more in common with *The Exorcist* than it does with *Night Of The Living Dead*.

The more we learn of the infection's origins and what it can do, the more bat's-arse the film becomes. We say embrace the madness – at least it's new territory for a subgenre in which invention is all too rare.



THE TOP 66 ZOMBIE FILMS



The *Zombie Advocacy Group* in action: "We're here, we're dead, get over it!"



44

AMERICAN ZOMBIE

2007 DIRECTOR: GRACE LEE

Neither zombie movies nor the "mockumentary" format are exactly new, but when you combine the two, suddenly you have something fresh. This smart, low-budget indie follows the attempts of documentary-maker Grace Lee and collaborator John Solomon to make a documentary about the "non-living community" of Los Angeles. Lee, incidentally, really *does* make documentaries – prior to *American Zombie* she was best known for *The Grace Lee Project* (in which she met women who share her name) and *Best Of The Worst* (a short about love for curry-infused sausage!).

Here she introduces us to four subjects, all "high-functioning" zombies. Ivan is a rather loveable skater dude who publishes a zine. Judy works for an organic food company and is keen to pass for human. Joel's an idealistic activist for ZAG, short for *Zombie Advocacy Group* (slogan: "We're here, we're dead, get used to it!"). Finally there's florist Lisa, keen to find out who she was before she died. There are sterling performances

across the board – even in their most absurd moments, these characters always seem *real* and relatable.

If it's gallons of gore you're after, this film will disappoint – the grossest sight on offer is a brief close-up of a wound oozing maggots, and the make-up generally isn't that startling (Judy, for example, just looks like she has a bad case of eczema). However, what *American Zombie* does have in spades is dry, understated humour. Sometimes that's to do with the personality quirks of the zombies (Lisa, for example, has a passion for naff string art), and sometimes it relates to the way they're treated by others, like the missionary who, sensing a new demographic, declares that, "Jesus was the original zombie!"

American Zombie looks at identity politics and exploitation of the underclass through the prism of the undead. Its sharp satirical edge also extends to the business of documentary-making itself – the camera's often turned on the filmmakers as they quarrel, with Grace accusing John of the politically incorrect approach of "essentialising zombies to their bodily functions".

Add to that an ongoing mystery about what sinister activity zombies might get up to when they gather *en masse* (in this case, for a festival called *Live Dead*), which ultimately comes to a head via scenes reminiscent of *The Blair Witch Project*, and you have a movie that works both as a droll observational comedy in the vein of Christopher Guest, and as a drama.

43

RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD 3

1993 DIRECTOR: BRIAN YUZNA

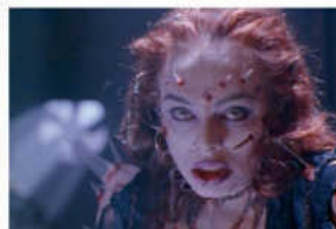
Of the four sequels to Dan O'Bannon's 1985 horror-comedy (see 5), this is the strongest. If you're expecting laughs, though, you'll be sorely disappointed. This is a warped love story – one with lashings of sado-masochistic kink – which requires a strong stomach.

It centres on the doomed relationship between teens Curt and Julie. Curt's dad commands a military base where they're turning zombies into "bio-mechanical weapons". After Julie dies in a motorcycle accident, Curt breaks in and uses Trioxin gas to reanimate her. Soon the pair are on the lam, with both the army and a gang of petty criminals on their trail...

In a fascinating twist, Julie – who remains aware, intelligent and able to communicate – discovers the only thing that can bring relief from her ever-gnawing hunger for brains is pain. As the film progresses, she skewers herself with more and more chunks of discarded metal and shards of glass. You expect a little perversion from Brian Yuzna, whose debut *Society* climaxed in a body-melding orgy, but he outdoes himself here, scraping a jagged nail along the intersection between death and eroticism.

True, the moment when Julie's unveiled as a scantily-clad zombette, all slashed thighs and nipple chains, seems to have less to do with the logic of her situation and more to do with audience titillation, yet her plight remains extremely affecting.

Julie's cries for help and self-mutilation make for harrowing viewing, both in and of themselves and as a metaphor for other forms of addiction (drugs, alcohol, self-harm) that blight relationships. The result is a surprisingly moving blood-spattered romance.



BRIAN YUZNA DIRECTOR OF *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD 3*

With Return Of The Living Dead 3, were you deliberately trying to make the first "sexy" zombie?

Yeah, Mindy Clarke was fantastic and we were determined that she also be sexy. She played the part like a junkie, and I thought that worked perfectly. I'd seen a girl on the street near my house that was dressed in cut-off jeans, ripped hose and had her nose pierced and I thought it was a very cool look, a more "street" version of the punks in Dan O'Bannon's original *Return Of The Living Dead*.

How did you approach making the film compared from the first two?

When I was asked if I'd be interested in making the third one, I jumped at the chance but I mentioned that I'd rather it not be played for laughs. The producers were fine with that and were only adamant that it included brain-eating! So I tried to come up with a mythology for the brain eating! I was also interested in doing a love story, but with a zombie twist.

What kind of release did it get?

Not much of one. Trimark had just had a great success with their movie *Leprechaun* and on the back of that, they were planning a big theatrical release for *Warlock 2* and *Return Of The Living Dead 3*. Unfortunately for us, *Warlock 2* came out first and it didn't do well, so they were unable to afford the wide cinema distribution we'd been promised.

How do you think the film stands up now?

I'm a big fan of zombie movies and I think *Return Of The Living Dead 3* is a good entry in the genre. It delivers the goods, it has moments of real horror, and it's sexy, gory and original. Even more than all that, it has a lot of heart!

Calum Waddell

42

DEADGIRL

2008  DIRECTORS: MARCEL SARMIENTO & GADI HAREL

Ask someone to describe a zombie movie, and it's likely they'll default to Romero's shambling ghouls invading homes, or Danny Boyle's rather more spring-heeled fiends stalking the streets of an abandoned metropolis. Things they're unlikely to consider include zombie sex slaves, delinquent necrophilia and existential angst – yet these are the keystones of Sarmiento and Harel's twisted *Deadgirl*.

Rickie and JT – two typical indie-movie misfits – bunk off from high school and inevitably end up in the local abandoned asylum. Instead of shit-smeared walls and piles of dead flies, in the basement they discover the body of a braindead, starkers young woman chained to a bed and wrapped in plastic. Despite the distinct whiff of putrefaction in the air, the sociopathic



Teen years are all about experimentation – but necrophilia is still frowned upon.

JT's thoughts turn to rape, thoughts which aren't even tempered by his discovering that the woman is undead. Meanwhile, Rickie, "the sensitive one", has his sights set on a girl with a pulse, but unfortunately in high school secrets never stay secret for long...

With its explicit nudity, boundary-busting aberrant sexuality and an attitude bordering on the irresponsible, *Deadgirl*'s shockingly repulsive high concept may be the most divisive in all of zombie cinema. It doesn't help that the high school is populated almost exclusively by trash-

talking bell-ends. In fact, the most sympathetic character isn't Rickie, but *Deadgirl* – and she would eat your face given half a chance. Despite all this, screenwriter Trent Haaga is smart enough to build in a redemptive arc for Rickie, and a climactic day of reckoning for JT, who transforms into a zombie pimp by the movie's end.

You could play a dangerous drinking game with the number of indie tropes Sarmiento and Harel raid but they make impressive use of a limited budget with grimy cinematography and frequent bursts



of nauseating gore. The actors fare much better. They may be playing types, but each of them fits the bill down to a greasy hair or busted lip – particularly Noah Segan, whose deranged JT is as memorable a monster as Captain Rhodes. The real innovation comes from Haaga's script, however, which has a refreshingly frank message about the horrors of growing up – face facts: your dreams are not going to come true – and a line in outrageous, pitch-black humour. Far from typical, and in this case that's a very good thing. **Jordan Farley**

41

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

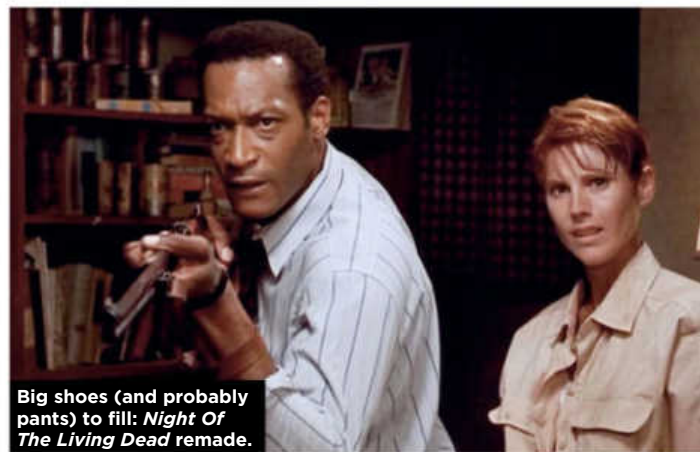
1990  DIRECTOR: TOM SAVINI

Remaking the movie that kick-started the modern-day zombie genre sounds like an idea every bit as ridiculous as revisiting *Psycho* or *The Wicker Man* (and you probably know how that turned out...). But this isn't an ersatz cash-in by pygmy talents, like *Night Of The Living Dead 3D* or the execrable *Day Of The Dead: Contagium*. This do-over comes from the creative colossus behind the original, with George Romero reworking the screenplay he co-wrote with John Russo first time round, and trusted lieutenant Tom Savini installed in the director's chair. The result could easily have been a remodelling so faithful to the original as to render it utterly pointless, but *Night '90* provides a valid new take on familiar material.



Watch the 1968 film now and two things are likely to spring to mind. The first is the lack of capable female characters – the female lead, Barbara, spends most of the film practically catatonic. Here, Romero gives the character a Ripley-style makeover – she may still begin the film in a state of shock, but by the final reel she's decked out in combats, vest-top and bullet belt, calmly blasting holes in undead bonces like an expert.

You may also question just why the heroes of the '68 *Night* board themselves up in a farmhouse in



Big shoes (and probably pants) to fill: *Night Of The Living Dead* remade.

the first place – with the ghouls being slow-moving and spread out, wouldn't a more sensible option have been to keep moving? Nu-Barbara voices this very opinion – and also points out that the central conflict between Ben and Cooper is basically a macho pissing contest. It's refreshing to see a filmmaker engaging with audience questions and acknowledging perceived weaknesses and logic gaps.

As you might expect, the action is slightly amped up. What's more interesting is the way Romero's

revised screenplay constantly keeps you on your toes: key characters meet a different fate and sequences are excised or swapped.

Sure, *Night '90* doesn't hit the mark all the time – for one thing, Kyra Schon's replacement as Karen looks far too old, and the excision of her trademark trowel attack feels like sacrilege – but it remains fascinating viewing for Romero buffs. It's probably the nearest George's fans can come to watching their favourite band perform a new arrangement of their biggest hit.

40

WHITE ZOMBIE

1932  DIRECTOR: VICTOR HALPERIN

As gorehounds know only too well, horror films have inspired an awful lot of hand-wringing over the years, but *White Zombie* may be the only one that features lots of *literal* hand-wringing. Its star, Bela Lugosi, plays an evil voodoo master whose mesmeric control over his victims seems to boil down to squeezing his mitts together in a most peculiar way!

The first feature-length zombie movie, *White Zombie* was also an independent production, shot largely at Universal Studios, reusing sets and props from numerous Universal horrors (including halls and corridors from *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*).

Lugosi's character, the sinisterly goateed Murder Legendre, may be the villain of the piece, but initially he's only acting at the behest of missionary Charles Beaumont. Beaumont is so



"Who dared suggest Boris Karloff is better at staring than me?"

smitten by the beautiful Madeleine (Madge Parker) that he's willing to countenance anything to make her his. The fact that she's getting married doesn't give him pause (he even has a crack at chatting her up as he walks her down the aisle, the cad!). After Legendre puts Madeleine under his spell, making it appear that she has died, Beaumont realises the error of his ways – but unfortunately there's no cancellation clause on this contract.

White Zombie is an entertaining mix of the marvellous and the ludicrous. Lugosi is at the height of his powers,

though admittedly the role amounts to little more than boggle-eyed staring and some whittling (it seems a candle is the perfect source material for a wax effigy). The nails-down-a-blackboard sound design is effective, particularly the grinding of the sugar mill where Legendre's zombified victims are put to work, and the screech of a vulture that at one point amusingly perches above his head, functioning rather like a six-foot-high neon sign flashing the word "EVIL". The sets are impressive too.

Unfortunately most of the cast are dreadful over-actors, and certain scenes



– such as the finale, during which the voodoo menace is vanquished when most of the undead conveniently wander off a cliff – are likely to inspire hoots of derisive laughter. Still, the film is undoubtedly atmospheric, and its historical significance alone makes it essential viewing for zombie fans.

A word of advice, should you plan to buy *White Zombie* on DVD: since the film has fallen into the public domain, there are scores of different editions available, most of them poor quality. The one to seek out is the 1999 Roan Group restoration, available on R1.

39

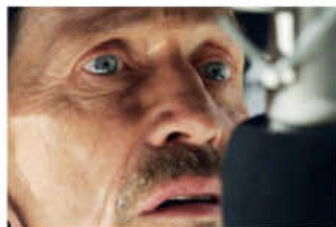
PONTYPOOL

2009  DIRECTOR: BRUCE McDONALD

"Language", as William Burroughs once put it, "is a virus". It's a notion that infects the zombie movie in this cultish effort, confined almost entirely to one set.

It's based on *Pontypool Changes Everything*, a novel by Tony Burgess, though Burgess's screenplay bears little resemblance to his book – he's called it "a chapter that the book imagined or forgot, or could fit in". Its technique recalls a low-budget war movie that, in the absence of the cash necessary to stage a battle, has characters peering out of a tent to provide a running commentary. It presents a zombie apocalypse from the point of view of a small-town radio DJ and his co-workers, trapped in their studio as reports of strange events trickle in.

In its early stages, *Pontypool* rather tests the patience. However, once it gets



going, it provides some surprisingly spine-chilling scenes, with the emphasis on isolated audio working every bit as effectively as the night-vision sequences in *Blair Witch* and *[REC]* to foster a sense of the uncanny. Sometimes having less of the picture helps to create heightened fear and tension. As director Bruce McDonald put it, "It's almost like instead of hiring ILM to do our special effects, we used the audience's imagination to provide the special effects."

The strange nature of the infection, spread by words that have



Shock jock Grant Mazzy – the kind of man dentists warm to immediately.

somehow become infected provides an undercurrent of surreal humour. Victims become locked into a linguistic loop, or start imitating commonplace sounds: a mob chants "Look out for U-boats!", while a girl mimics a singing kettle. Meanwhile, Stephen McHattie, as "voice of truth" shock jock Grant Mazzy, has the sort of 50-Woodbines-a-day voice that vibrates your cochlea as pleasurably as a masseuse working out your muscle knots.

At times you may wonder whether the visuals are really necessary; the project was originally commissioned as

a radio drama, and indeed an audio play version was produced simultaneously, though McHattie's exuberant rants are a treat. The storytelling could be a little clearer, too. But then, this is just the sort of film that warrants a second viewing.

As for that title? It refers to the place in Ontario in which the film is set, not the one in south Wales (from which the Canadian town took its name). But why Pontypool? According to McDonald, "I think Tony was attracted to the title cos it sounds slightly pornographic!" Whatever floats your boat...

38

LIFE AFTER BETH

2014  DIRECTOR: JEFF BAENA

"What do you want from me, Zach? I'm a fucking zombie." So blurts Aubrey Plaza's Beth, after dying of a snake bite, and Jeff Baena's directorial debut – the best zom-rom-com since *Shaun Of The Dead* – proves more interested in relationships and emotions than the gore or lore of Romero.

It starts with Dane DeHaan's Zach grieving the loss of his titular girlfriend and gravitating to those who share his pain, her parents Maury and Geenie. Zach and Beth were going through a rough patch, on the verge of breaking up, but their troubles simply add guilt and regret to the raw grief.

Then Beth miraculously returns home unaltered, bar an inexplicable love of attics and smooth jazz. Initially Zach clutches at the opportunity to put things right, but it's not easy with Beth beginning to decompose, and her execrable breath is the least of their problems... Unresolved conflicts are resurrected, with Zach realising he's perhaps more suited to childhood pal Erica (Anna Kendrick).

Playing like an absurdist spin on hit TV show *The Returned*, *Life After Beth* is every bit as deranged as you might expect a directorial debut from the co-writer of *I Heart Huckabees* to be.

Baena splatters his movie with observations both astute and askance while favouring gags over gag-reflex, and scores a real coup in landing DeHaan and Plaza – the former shows he can match *Huckabees*' Mark Wahlberg in the play-it-straight-for-laughs stakes, and the latter's just plain adorable however necrotic she might be.

Keeping it personal, Baena's movie nonetheless builds background details to capture a genuine sense of the apocalypse... a vision rendered oddly palatable by consistent chuckles and, naturally, a smooth-jazz soundtrack.

Jamie Graham



37

THE LIVING DEAD GIRL

1982  DIRECTOR: JEAN ROLLIN

What do you expect from a low-budget zombie film? Lousy *papier-mâché*-and-poster-paint effects? Probably. An undead Catherine Deneuve-alike elegantly strolling around in a flowing white gown and touching flashbacks to childhood flower-pressing? Maybe not.

Unpredictability is a rare thing in cinema, which is why the late French director Jean Rollin is revered by many. *The Living Dead Girl* is a typically off-the-wall Rollin effort. It starts off like a grim Italian Romero knock-off, as the release of a mysterious toxic chemical in the catacombs of a château resurrects one Catherine Valmont, who then wanders around slaughtering people with her talon-like fingernails. Later on it goes a bit *Hellraiser* as her childhood friend Hélène lures back strangers to, ahem, join them for dinner, before exploring melancholy arthouse territory as Catherine slowly regains her humanity.

This wasn't Rollin's first foray into zombie territory. In 1981, he hid behind a pseudonym to pick up a paycheck on cruddy Nazi-zombie flick *Zombie Lake*. And in 1978's *The Grapes Of Death*, wine-quaffers are turned into decay-faced psycho killers after a vineyard is sprayed with an experimental pesticide.

The Living Dead Girl mixes poetry and gore, and its bizarre juxtapositions of "classy" (the heroine wanly playing with an antique rocking horse) and "sleazy" (blood spray onto naked breasts) mean it's constantly surprising. Only in a Rollin film can you be wincing at an axe-killing one moment and wondering if he's homaging a pre-Raphaelite painting the next...



The Children sees normal kids turn into grippy little zombie monsters...



36

THE CHILDREN

1980  DIRECTOR: MAX KALMANOWICZ

Zombie children are pretty hard to beat in the creepiness stakes: George Romero proved as much in *Night Of The Living Dead*, with Kyra Schon's trowel-wielding killer. This low-budget indie flick shot in Massachusetts underlines the point.

The set-up is both quaintly old-fashioned and very of its time, as a school bus drives through a yellow cloud of radioactive gas that's leaked from a power station – it's like *The Incredible Shrinking Man* crossed with *Three Mile Island*. Later, the bus is found empty and a search for five missing kids begins. It would be better not to find them, because – inexplicably – they've been transformed into bullet-proof atomic zombies who can microwave you to a crisp with one touch of their black-fingernailed hands. Yikes!

Sadly, many of the deaths occur off-screen (and those that don't showcase rather crappy time-lapse effects), but it's the lead-up to the killings that really chills the blood. One girl lures in her mother by standing with her arms stretched out for a hug and crying "Mommy!" As Mom starts

emitting yellow steam, the daughter has a cheerful grin plastered all over her face. Two of the kids, incidentally, were the offspring of producer/co-writer Carl Albright, who had to bribe one of them into performing with an offer of jam doughnuts!

The Children is far from perfect. The pacing is pretty dreadful, with nothing much happening for great swathes of the time, as the Sheriff wanders from one kid's home to another. The score, by *Friday The 13th*'s Harry Manfredini, basically stuffs *Psycho* and *Halloween* into a blender (and may sound more than a little familiar to Jason fans too...).

But what sticks in the memory is the way the kids are defeated. They can only be killed *when their hands are chopped off*. Even hardened horror fans are likely to splutter in disbelief as Gil Rogers's Sheriff hacks little kids' mitts off with a sword.

There is a subtext here, one that'll appeal to those who'd rather stay sprog-free: co-writers Carl Albright and Ed Terry came up with the basic idea shortly after the birth of Albright's first child, when they were discussing how children can come to dominate and control your life, and one or two put-upon parents might smile wryly in recognition as they watch kids *literally* smothering mums and dads to death.

Basically, though, *The Children* is designed to gross people out. It does a pretty good job of that, and manages to provide plenty of unintentional hilarity too.



Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things: trousers bad enough to turn anyone pale.



35

CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS

1971 DIRECTOR: BOB CLARK

Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things is one of those movies you feel downright guilty for loving. Shot in a park in Coral Gables, Miami, by a bunch of college buddies for a mere \$40,000, it is in large part a spoofing homage to *Night Of The Living Dead*.

Egotistical theatre director Alan (a self-mocking turn by screenwriter Alan Ormsby, who was also in charge of the make-up effects) takes a troupe of actors to an island graveyard to creep them out with some mock-Satanic invocations. Of course, it's all fun and games until someone gets their throat ripped out... Eventually the dead rise, and it's board-up-the-windows time.

This second half is pure Romero rip-off. It's crude, but has a winning sense of urgency. The first half, meanwhile, is like watching a hippy theatre group improvising a drive-in movie, and a showcase for some hysterical acting (in both senses of

the word). The standout freak is Ormsby himself, an egomaniac with a gloriously florid turn of phrase, resplendent in striped loon pants that Willy Wonka would probably turn down as being too garish.

The technical incompetence is alarming – you find yourself thinking things like, “hang on, that girl's talking. Why am I looking at the back of her head?” But the scales are balanced by invention. The soundtrack of electronic oscillations is unsettlingly weird, and the script is jam-packed with groan-inducing puns, sardonic one-liners and spaced hippy aphorisms. “Man is a machine for manufacturing manure!” is our favourite – although “I haven't laughed so much since Granny got caught in the wringer!” comes in a close second. The end result is like watching a Romero rip-off directed by Ed Wood, with a script scribbled by Joe Orton while he was ripped to the tits on poppers. The same writer/director team of Ormsby and Bob Clark (who were roommates at the University Of Miami) went on to collaborate on the superior *Deathdream* (see 10), as well as, er, *Porky's II: The Next Day*.

The film was marketed with a great gimmick: all ticket buyers could get their funeral expenses paid in full if they were “attacked by a ghoulish cannibal” during a screening. For a few years now, there's been talk of a possible remake (Bob Clark owns the rights, and has written a script). Don't hold your breath, though...

34

28 WEEKS LATER

2007 DIRECTOR: JUAN CARLOS FRESNADILLO

When the credits roll on *28 Days Later* (see 16) you feel that the film's world has been fully explored, and nothing worthwhile remains to be said. So the announcement of a sequel inevitably inspired fears of a crass DTV effort, lacking the original's visual poetry. But *28 Weeks Later* is a pleasant surprise.

Six months on from the original outbreak, the Infected have starved to death, and a Yank-led NATO force is repopulating Blighty. Father-of-two Don (Robert Carlyle) is reunited with his kids in a safe zone on the Isle of Dogs. Unbeknownst to everyone, though, the rage virus has mutated...

After a low-key, character-led opening act, the film becomes infected with the action virus. What follows is an extended chase, with a diminishing group of survivors hurtling from one setpiece to another. Fortunately, some of those are powerful enough to stick in the memory, and some adrenaline-pumping hand-held camerawork helps create palpable urgency.

The sequel feels much more like a “zombie film” than its forebear. There are exploding heads aplenty, and it even kicks off with a *Night Of The Living Dead*-style prologue featuring the Infected breaking into a boarded-up farmhouse. It's far more violent than Danny Boyle's film, with carnage meted out by gun, flamethrower and helicopter rotor blade.

Spanish director Fresnadillo strives to evoke the spirit of *28 Days Later*, and sometimes nails it, matching Boyle's postcards of a deserted Westminster with images of tanks rumbling past the Millennium Dome and US soldiers on patrol in suburban streets. But his film lacks the idiosyncratic unpredictability of the original – it's more of a cookie-cutter action-horror; a blunt object. Still, it's about as good as we could reasonably have expected.



33

FIDO

2006 DIRECTOR: ANDREW CURRIE

Sometimes it feels like all you need to crack a career in the movies is one perfect sentence, a phrase that sets the imagination racing, and *Fido's* pitch is a peach: “zombies in *Pleasantville*”. It's an irresistible idea, one this Canadian zom-com explores with sly satire and considerable charm.

The setting is a '50s small-town world of shiny automobiles, side partings and vibrant Technicolor, the sort of place where mom sublimates her simmering sexual energies into the baking of delicious apple pies. In this parallel-universe '50s, a radioactive cloud has resurrected the dead. Fortunately, the “domestication collar” means zombies can now serve society – and if you want to keep up with the Joneses, you simply *must* have one...

Pleasantville is just one obvious reference point (though director Andrew Currie says he took inspiration from '50s melodramas such as *Peyton Place*). The Robinson family's newest addition, Fido (Billy Connolly) is a close relative of Bub in *Day Of The Dead*. And Fido's one-boy-and-his-zom relationship with little Timmy Robinson is pure *Lassie* pastiche.

It's obvious that something will go wrong. But the film cleverly works through its concept's ramifications (kids have daily rifle-shooting practice; dad's obsessed with saving to become one of the few rich enough to actually be *buried*). It also has depth, with Currie satirising Homeland Security culture via some swift jabs about state control in a paranoid society.

It's a sweetly likeable film, too – an odd thing to say, considering that it includes an old lady being battered to death with a shovel, as well as a frustrated housewife flirting with a walking corpse. Throw *Fido* a bone and you'll find it wide-eyed and waggy-tailed, eager to please.





"This *isn't* the best ever zombie movie? Screw it, boy, I'm heading home..."

32

ZOMBIELAND

2009 DIRECTOR: RUBEN FLEISCHER

Zombieland is the zombie movie for people who don't like zombie movies. For dedicated fans of the genre, observing its success is rather like watching a band with lowest common denominator appeal topping the album charts, while the more innovative musicians who inspired them languish in obscurity. It certainly isn't a bad film, but the fact that of all the movies on IMDb tagged with the keyword "zombies", this is the third-highest rated, rankles a little.

Here's one issue we have, for starters: considering this is a film entitled *Zombieland*, it doesn't actually feature a lot of zombies. For the most part (until the climactic scenes in an amusement park), our heroes don't encounter many of the undead, instead driving down empty highways and wandering, unmenaced, through deserted streets. If millions of have been infected, where did they all go?

Admittedly, this is at times a highly amusing film, particularly when it comes to the rules expounded by Columbus (Jesse Eisenberg), which include "the double tap" and "check the back seat". Others could include something along the lines of "Don't fire machine guns in the air just for the hell of it" and "Turning on all the rides in a theme park *may* attract attention". But such rules don't seem to be necessary in this movie. As zombie apocalypses go, it's a stroll in the park.

That's why *Shaun Of The Dead* is a superior movie. In *Shaun* there's always a sense of danger to throw the comedy into relief, and a real emotional depth. In *Zombieland* – as in Wes Anderson's oeuvre – characters often seem to be little more than an accumulation of quirks: an irrational fear of clowns; an obsessive love of Twinkies.

Don't get us wrong: *Zombieland* is great fun, particularly the all-action finale. Who could fail to love a movie in which Woody Harrelson machine-guns hordes of zombies while hanging off a fairground ride? Hopefully it functions as a kind of gateway drug of the undead. But if you think this is one the best zombie movies of all time then you're in *serious* need of some further education. Keep right on reading, kid, and we'll give you a few pointers.



Another typical bank holiday weekend at Alton Towers.

31

THE DEAD

2011 DIRECTORS: HOWARD & JONATHAN FORD

Sometimes all you need to do to make a familiar story feel fresh is to transplant it into a different landscape, as this film demonstrates. *The Dead* (shot mostly in Burkina Faso and Ghana) does just that, by showing us a zombie apocalypse unfolding in West Africa.

Our identification character is American Brian Murphy (Rob Freeman) who, it eventually turns out, is an engineer for the US army. Stranded in the middle of nowhere when the last plane out of the country crash-lands, he teams up with a young African soldier who's searching for his missing son.

The Dead specialises in three things. The first is ticking-clock sequences: as Murphy struggles to open a crate full of weapons or get a car running before he's surrounded by the undead, it's incredibly tense. The second is remarkably realistic, gory make-up; early on we see a zombie staggering along on a broken leg, bone poking through the skin, and it's so believable that just for a moment you wonder whether the filmmakers might have trawled the local hospitals for accident victims in desperate need of a few dollars. And the third? Unrelenting bleakness. Don't watch this if you're after a happy ending.

Freeman barely gets to say a word for the first 20 minutes of the movie – and to be honest that's a good thing, since once the dialogue does kick in, much of it is rather clichéd. But that doesn't matter a great deal in the grand scheme of things. *The Dead* is a film that doesn't waste your time, dropping you straight into the middle of the nightmare. It's also grim, tense, constantly surprising and, thanks to shots of desert vistas and fabulous rock formations, has moments of awe-inspiring natural beauty too.



HOWARD AND JONATHAN FORD

DIRECTORS OF
THE DEAD

You're both successful commercial directors. Why the switch to zombies, and why Africa?

Jonathan: I'd wanted to make this film since seeing Romero's *Dawn Of The Dead*. We wanted to make something totally authentic that people had never seen before. Going to Africa allowed us to bring in so many different layers of meaning.

How difficult a choice of location was it for an independent shoot?

Howard: On the first day I got mugged at knifepoint. The police tried to put me in jail for driving without a licence. Then things really started to get bad...

Jonathan: There was endless police corruption, and our vehicles usually wouldn't get past all the roadblocks.

Howard: We had a Land Rover full of limbs and crates of AK47s...

Jonathan: Then we'd break down. Then we'd run out of fuel. Then we'd run out of water. We often wondered if we'd ever get out alive.

Howard: Rob Freeman, our lead, collapsed on set with cerebral malaria. He was rushed to a mosquito-infested hospital and the doctor told us he'd die.

You went places where no one had seen a film crew before. Did locals take to playing zombie extras?

Howard: That's part of the horror of *The Dead*: some of our "zombies" were literally starving to death. The only good thing about the shoot was having the chance to help them.

Jonathan: We could pay them decent money, treat them with respect – and all they had to do was walk slowly or lie down. They just couldn't believe it. You couldn't keep the smiles off their faces – not a good look for zombies!

Paul Bradshaw

30

ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS

1979 🇮🇹 DIRECTOR: LUCIO FULCI

If anyone asks you what the cinema of the undead has contributed to the sum total of human knowledge, point them at *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (aka *Zombi 2*). Thanks to director Lucio Fulci, we know that a zombie can kick a shark's ass in a fight. Mind you, given that the aquatic scrapper loses an arm in the process, maybe we should consider it a draw.

Fulci's first tangle with the undead was an important milestone in the genre, inspiring a flood of imitations from his countrymen (see page 48 for much more on this), but it's not his best work. It begins enigmatically, with the mysterious arrival of a yacht in New York Harbor – a yacht that turns out to be carrying two zombies. The climax is satisfyingly action-packed: besieged



Graphic ocular damage helped earn *Zombie Flesh Eaters* a ban in the UK.

on the Caribbean island on which the outbreak originated, the main characters (led by Ian McCulloch's Peter West, a heart-warming reminder of the days when a balding English journalist was considered a suitable hero) lob Molotov cocktails at the advancing hordes. Sadly, in between there's often a sense that the film is treading water, and that a more interesting tale is unfolding, unseen, as the infection spreads back in the Big Apple.

A couple of outrageous examples of Fulci's blood-splattered

showmanship keep you hooked. In one infamous wince-inducing moment, a woman's eyeball is impaled on a jagged shard of wood. Then there's the aforementioned rumble between a tiger shark and a zombie – actually Mexican marine biologist/documentarian Ramón Bravo.

Zombie Flesh Eaters' other great strength is Gianetto De Rossi's make-up. At their best, De Rossi's zombies really look like they've just dragged their rotting carcasses out of the grave. His centuries-old Conquistador zombie, with its jagged teeth and



disintegrating flesh, worms wriggling in an empty eye socket, is infinitely superior to the blue-faced background zombies that blight Romero's *Dawn Of The Dead*.

If only the script was of such high quality. If it's gore you're after, *Zombie Flesh Eaters* delivers (which explains why it was only finally released uncut in the UK as recently as 2005), but as far as storytelling goes... well, let's just say that if you strategically skipped through the DVD, just watching five key chapters, you wouldn't be missing all that much.

29

LAND OF THE DEAD

2005 🇺🇸 DIRECTOR: GEORGE ROMERO

The big surprise about George Romero's long-awaited return to the genre after a 20-year absence was this: the zombies haven't only taken over the world, but they've become the dominant sympathetic characters too. Romero's always confessed to having a soft spot for his "stencches", but in this fourth entry in the *Dead* series, they're practically the heroes to be cheered on. Humanity is venal, greedy, selfish. The undead are just trying to survive.

If a newbie director had taken the liberties that George takes here, zombiephiles would have been up in arms. True, George's zombies haven't put on their running spikes, but he's done something far more radical. They've evolved. Not only do they work out how to use tools



and shoot guns, but they also start to communicate – to feel empathy. They become a *community*. In Marxist terms, it's as if they've had an outbreak of class consciousness.

The Bolshevik of the piece is Big Daddy, a zombie who leads his undead brothers over the river into the human enclave of Fiddler's Green, where the lucky few live in a bubble of consumerist splendour. The spider at the centre of this web is Kaufman (a menacing Dennis Hopper). It's here that the traditional Romero subtext makes itself felt, as the director



The zombies get to grips with guns and tools in *Land Of The Dead*.

illustrates how totalitarianism can thrive when a community lives in fear. However, barring the odd smart line (at one point Kaufman snaps, "We don't negotiate with terrorists!"), the post-9/11 subtext is underplayed. The more resonant theme is the growing gap between rich and poor; how the ghettos of the underclass exist cheek-by-jowl with the hermetically sealed enclaves of the super-rich.

The film's one big problem is a major subplot. That human enclave is serviced by commandos in an armoured battle-truck called Dead

Reckoning. When one of Kaufman's disenchanted lackeys (John Leguizamo) steals this weapon to turn it against him, a guys-on-a-mission storyline ensues. It all seems rather conventional, rather *Hollywood action movie* for a Romero film.

Because of that subplot (and a curiously upbeat ending), there are moments when this feels like AN Other Zombie Movie rather than a Romero film. But for the most part, it's just what you'd expect from George: the same idiosyncratic mix of gore, politics and gallows humour.



Forget the story and just revel in *Black Magic 2's* madcap excess.



28

BLACK MAGIC 2

1976 ★ DIRECTOR: MENG HUA HO

Other movies have “aim for the head!”, but *Black Magic 2* had a zombie-slaying slogan, it’d be “reach for the pliers!” In this grotesque, ultra-sleazy Hong Kong horror from the Shaw Brothers Studio (best known for its martial arts movies), a black magician turns corpses into his slaves by driving whacking great nails into their heads. Extract the nails and gruesome super-ageing and face-melting ensues. The novelty of this Eastern take on the undead provides a slither of intellectual justification for viewing, but nowhere enough to make it a respectable pursuit.

The villain of the piece, Kang Chung, is clearly a Bond fan, judging by his penchant for both stroking a Siamese cat and Roger Moore eyebrow acting. An octogenarian, he maintains a youthful appearance by drinking *human milk*. In one jaw-dropping sequence, he summons a young woman to his lair, shaves off her pubic hair, sets it alight and drops the remains in what looks like a glass of Night Nurse (don’t try this cocktail at home – it tickles the throat something terrible). After drinking

this concoction, the bewitched girl starts to lactate and, when Kang Chung settles down to suckle, becomes so erotically excited that frenzied shagging follows...

That’s the most excessive sequence in the film, but there’s stiff competition. Other delights include a rubber crocodile attack, a kung fu fight on a cable car, a mutant foetus, the villain being beaten with a dead cat, and a voyeuristic sex scene that makes the granny-love episode of *Misfits* look positively tasteful.

The fashions are deliciously ’70s and the soundtrack is fabulous, combining atonal clattering, funky breakbeats and fuzz guitar. One track (which plays as a dancer gyrates in a nightclub) was sampled for the Beastie Boys’ “Looking Down The Barrel Of A Gun”.

The story doesn’t amount to much, boiling down to “some doctors investigate a series of mysterious deaths” (and even “investigate” is overstating the case – the trail quickly leads to Kang because “people say he’s responsible”). But that’s unlikely to concern you much in the face of *Black Magic 2's* onslaught of excess.

If you survive a viewing without your brain ordering your eyeballs to melt in self-defence, seek out more films by the same director, such as *Black Magic* (which you don’t need to watch first) and *The Oily Maniac*, plus the equally OTT horrors of fellow Shaw Brothers director Chih-Hung Kwei (particularly *The Boxer’s Omen* and *Corpse Mania*).

27

PLANET TERROR

2007 ★ DIRECTOR: ROBERT RODRIGUEZ

If you’re gonna enjoy *Planet Terror*, it’ll help if you’re the sort of sick puppy who’s fascinated by photos of flesh-eating viruses and tickled by amputee gags.

Stateside, it originally screened as the opening half of *Grindhouse*, Rodriguez’s double-bill team-up with Quentin Tarantino. Fortunately, once hacked apart from its conjoined twin, *Planet Terror* works just fine. It bears little relation to any *real* grindhouse fare, mind, unless you think John Carpenter made grindhouse movies.

After experimental biochemical weapons are released into the air at an army base, people begin mutating into bubo-faced, pus-squirting crazies. Cue shoot-outs, exploding cars and more bodily dismemberment than you can shake a ripped-off arm at.

On paper, it’s unspeakably grim. On screen, its hyperbolic, slapstick approach to gore is a whole lot of dirty fun. It’s too self-consciously cool to label as a spoof, but if you took *Tremors*, gave it some eightball tats, then tipped a bucketload of offal over it, it’d look a lot like *Planet Terror*.

The characters are B-movie archetypes. There’s a button-badgeable one-liner every few minutes: “Some of the best jokes are about cripples!”, “As useless as the pecker on the Pope”. And Rose McGowan plays a stripper with a machine-gun for a leg. Huh huh. Cool.

At times Rodriguez goes too far: poor Naveen Andrews is saddled with a ridiculous penchant for cutting his enemies’ nuts off, and QT’s inevitable cameo as a leering rapist adds an unpleasant tang of misogyny.

Still, as dumb movies go, *Planet Terror* is pretty damn smart. If it had been made in 1982, it’d probably be a cult classic by now.



26

CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD

1980 ★ DIRECTOR: LUCIO FULCI

Zombies: should they be able to leg it, or be restricted to a stately stagger? Once you’ve watched *City Of The Living Dead*, the whole argument seems rather redundant. Never mind running: in this film, Italian director Lucio Fulci’s zombies can *teleport*.

Why? God knows. Look for logic in a Fulci film and you’ll come back empty handed; the plot is generally a flimsy pretext for outbursts of the irrational. In this case, a priest’s suicide opens a portal to Hell in Dunwich (ring any bells, Lovecraft fans?), a village apparently “built on the remains of Salem” (yes, we thought Salem was still standing as well). Cue all manner of “horrendously awful things... Things that would shatter your imagination!”, such as an unlucky chap having his head forced into an industrial drill, and a blizzard of maggots.

The baffling ending infuriates many. The characters are all ciphers – particularly reporter Peter Bell (Christopher George) who, with his sports jacket casually slung over his shoulder, looks like he should be crooning to divorcees on a cruise ship. And some of the director’s tricks – such as zooming in on a character’s eyes – recur so often that it becomes downright laughable.

However, with its fog-shrouded settings and Fabio Frizzi’s doomy, heartbeat-aping score, *City Of The Living Dead* is undeniably tremendously atmospheric. Plus the gore setpieces are simply jaw-dropping, particularly the one where a young woman pukes up her intestines (actually a plateful of sheep tripe – yuck!) at considerable length. While not as outlandish as Fulci’s finest fever-dream, *The Beyond* (see 3), it’s still startlingly crackers.



THE TOP 66 ZOMBIE FILMS



Working down the tin mine plays hell with a lady's complexion.

25

THE PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES

1966 DIRECTOR: JOHN GILLING

One of four films shot back-to-back by Hammer and released as double bills, this thrifty production shared sets with *The Reptile* and was released as a support feature to *Dracula: Prince Of Darkness*.

The story unfolds not in one of Hammer's typical mittel-European settings, but in a small Cornish village. André Morell plays professor of medicine Sir James Forbes. Called in by the local GP following a series of unexplained deaths, he soon discovers that the graves in the cemetery are mysteriously empty...

Pitting an upper class figure who exerts a baleful influence over young women against a professorial protagonist, *Plague* has much in common with 1958's *Dracula*. Continuing the echoes of Stoker, much of the incident concerns the attempts of the local squire (who returned from a sojourn in Haiti with a mastery of voodoo) to bring womenfolk under his thrall; human sacrifice is the rationalisation, but exactly why that's necessary is never explained.



Despite a faint whiff of déjà vu, the film is a great success. Morell is outstanding as Sir James, a Holmes/Watson composite who's both likeably grouchy (his idea of affectionate banter is telling his daughter he "should have drowned her at birth"), and a game old bird, surprisingly willing to dig up a recently-interred corpse for an illicit autopsy.

Class warriors will find plenty that chimes with their worldview: Squire Hamilton's goons are a hissable gang of red-coated fox hunters and while Count Dracula can be seen as a metaphor for class exploitation, Squire Hamilton requires zero interpretation. His motivation – one of the most bizarre in horror cinema – is assembling a cheap workforce for his tin mine!

The British censors labelled the script "insane rubbish", and you can still appreciate what occasioned their pursed-lipped disdain. Our first sight of a zombie comes when one rears up unexpectedly and *tosses a corpse* (Jacqueline Pearce, later *Blake's 7*s Servalan) straight at the camera. The scene in which she emerges from the grave, smiling seductively as she advances, only to be decapitated with a shovel, remains powerfully eerie. So does the dream sequence that follows, where the dead (whose make-ups incorporated crumpled tissue paper!) rise from their graves en masse; all Dutch angles and dry ice, it feels like the missing link between the voodoo-zombie horrors of the '20s and '30s and Romero's flesh-eaters.



24

RE-ANIMATOR

1985 DIRECTOR: STUART GORDON

HP Lovecraft's "Herbert West – Reanimator", serialised in 1922, is one of zombie cinema's few literary forebears. Stuart Gordon's gore-comedy takes a loose approach to adaptation. Elements are maintained: the young West's method – injecting a reanimating serum into recently-deceased corpses; his experiments with reviving bodily parts. Others are disregarded: Lovecraft's story follows Herbert over many years.

Genre favourite Jeffrey Combs is superb in the lead role, bringing West's "ice-cold intellectualism" to life with furrow-browed intensity; the lugubrious David Gale is equally good as antagonist Dr. Hill, whose desire to get one over on his upstart student continues post-mortem.

Lovecraft's story was already full of grotesque humour, but Gordon turns the dial up to 11. Events become madder, the body-horror ever-more OTT, to the point where you may start to feel faint: featuring decapitation by shovel and intestines that attack like a boa constrictor, *Re-Animator*'s not for the squeamish. Only when a young woman's threatened with sexual assault by a *decapitated head* does Gordon's assault on good taste briefly cease to feel like outrageous fun: luckily, he pulls back from the brink before it dives between her thighs.

A synopsis makes the film sound like a simple catalogue of atrocities, but there's a comic-book exuberance to its cavalcade of ghoulish sights, and something charmingly mom-and-pop about the old-school effects – when a severed head speaks, you're conscious of the rest of the actor, hidden out of shot. Best served with a bottle of your animating agent of choice, *Re-Animator* won't cause you to think, but will make you wince, guffaw and howl in delighted disbelief.



STUART GORDON DIRECTOR OF RE-ANIMATOR

The idea of a horror-comedy was still quite a fresh thing when the film came out, right?

Absolutely – we were trying to do something new... We wanted to be as outrageous as we could, and push the boundaries as far as possible. I think that might be why *Re-Animator* went down well with audiences – it was like audience participation in a way. I don't think viewers knew if they should scream or laugh.

The soundtrack was criticised for ripping off the score to Psycho.

I had said to our composer, Richard Band, that I loved Bernard Herrmann and wanted something like that, and he did it almost as a joke – he wanted to have a credit that read "with apologies to Bernard Herrmann"! Somehow it got left out and he got a lot of shit over the years from people thinking that he stole the music. We even got a letter from the Herrmann Estate telling us that if Bernard was still alive we would have been sued!

Did many walk out when Herbert West resurrects a cat, the animal goes insane and he kills it again?

A lot of people walked out of the movie, but not during that scene. The sequence that caused most people to leave the theatre was where David Gale is showing them how to remove a brain during an autopsy.

Did Barbara Crampton have issues with the nude scene where she gets licked by a decapitated head?

We originally cast somebody else, and at the last minute she got scared and decided not to do it. She said she'd spoken to her mother, who told her this was a big mistake. So we went back to square one, which is when Barbara came in and – hey! – she was a very brave girl.
Calum Waddell

23

DEAD & BURIED

1981 🇺🇸 DIRECTOR: GARY SHERMAN

If you know of this little gem but haven't actually seen it, you may have been led into inaccurate assumptions by three things: the striking poster image (which features a face emerging from the earth), mention of "the creators of *Alien*", and the fact that it was caught up in the video nasties panic of the early '80s.

Although *Alien* scribes Dan O'Bannon and Ronald Shusett were credited for the script, they actually reworked an earlier screenplay by Alex Stern and Jeff Millar. O'Bannon said he performed minimal script doctoring and only reluctantly agreed to have his name attached for commercial reasons, which rather suggests that Stern and Millar deserve more credit.

We don't see any living dead clawing their way out of the ground, either. James Farentino plays the Sheriff in a



Labelled a video nasty, *Dead & Buried* is actually a very atmospheric fable.

small coastal town who's faced with a series of violent murders of visitors. Some of these victims are later seen walking around – someone is using black magic to reanimate corpses.

Dead & Buried's status as a video nasty rests principally upon one jolting moment, in which a bandaged burns victim has a syringe jabbed into his eye by a nurse (some of the work of effects genius Stan Winston). If director Gary Sherman had had his way, further scenes of gore (one man is slashed in the face with a harpoon, another has tubes stuck up his nostrils and acid

pumped into his face) would never have been shot. The studio changed hands while the film was being made, and these inserts were foisted upon the director by his financiers.

Strip them away and this is a dark fairytale with a subdued palette of blues and greens, which builds mood via the use of fog and shadow – more of an eerie "weird tale" or magical fable than an exercise in gore. It also has a timeless feel, thanks partly to the use of big band 78s on the soundtrack, but chiefly because of the location filming. Like James Dean's *East Of Eden*, *Dead*



& *Buried* was shot in Mendocino, an artist colony in California. Robert "Freddy Krueger" Englund (who has a minor role) described filming there as like being "dropped down in a time machine in the '40s".

If the film has one flaw, it's that we're only presented with two plausible candidates for the villain of the piece, so as a whodunnit it's about as satisfying as an episode of *Scooby-Doo*. However, the melancholy atmosphere, a squirm-inducing necrophilia subtext and a brilliant final twist more than compensate.

22

PSYCHOMANIA

1972 🇬🇧 DIRECTOR: DON SHARP

Interviewed for BBC Four documentary *Truly, Madly, Cheaply*, star Nicky Henson gleefully dismissed *Psychomania* as "a piece of shit". We respectfully disagree. Sure, this zombie biker flick featuring – of all people – Beryl Reid, isn't exactly *Citizen Kane*, but it is hugely entertaining.

Want to live forever? The way to do so is to commit suicide, but *really* believe you're going to come back from the other side, a secret imparted to biker gang leader Tom (Henson) after a baffling encounter with a giant frog in a mirror. Okay, there's a little more to it than that. His mum (Reid) signed up to a Faustian pact, and a weird frog amulet (which looks like something knocked out by an eight-year-old with a Shaker Maker kit) is also involved, but belief is key.

After Tom steers his Triumph off a



bridge, he returns immortal. Soon the rest of his gang – The Living Dead – are following suit. With his posh BBC English tones, beautifully conditioned hair and spotless leather jacket, Tom isn't exactly your average Hells Angel, and his gang – who revel in names such as Chopped Meat, Hatchet, Gash and, er, Bertram – are a rum bunch. Initially, their idea of mayhem – driving around the local shops snatching umbrellas out of people's hands – is dreadfully tame. Post-mortem, they progress to mowing down babies in prams, just for the giggles.



Psychomania boasts the poshest biker gang you're ever likely to see.

And there are many laughs to be had from *Psychomania* – it's so utterly preposterous! When Tom dies, he's placed in the grave sitting on his bike, with his head poking out. The gang's suicides are outlandish – one dives out of a plane without opening his parachute. And the dialogue will, as Tom might phrase it, "blow your mind". When Tom asks his girlfriend to join him on the other side, she replies, "I promised my mum I'd help her go shopping in the morning!"

Psychomania's pleasures aren't all of the camp variety. The opening title

sequence – bikers riding around a mist-shrouded stone circle in slow-mo – is atmospheric, the chase scenes are well-mounted by Don Sharp (who also directed several Hammer films) and John Cameron's score (available from Trunk Records) features some glorious wah-wah-heavy psych-funk.

If you're tickled, check out the other collaboration by screenwriters Arnaud d'Usseau (blacklisted after the McCarthy witch hunts) and Julian Zimet: *Horror Express*, in which a defrosted missing link goes on the rampage on a train, is almost as mad.

21

[REC]

2007  DIRECTORS: JAUME BALAGUERÓ
& PACO PLAZA

This Spanish-language chiller hitches techniques popularised by *The Blair Witch Project* – the “found footage” format, the shaky camerawork, the green nightvision shots – to a tale of nu-zombies (or, if you prefer, the Infected). British indie flick *The Zombie Diaries* (2006) tried something similar, and George Romero also had a pop with 2007’s *Diary Of The Dead*. [REC] is the most effective of the three, because, like *Cloverfield*, it doesn’t try to make philosophical statements, and is careful not to outstay its welcome.

The framing story riffs on 9/11, a documentary in which filmmakers following a Manhattan firefighter found themselves at the epicentre of epoch-making events as the Twin Towers fell. Here, a TV crew also follows firefighters, called to break into an old woman’s apartment. The woman attacks and bites; the building is sealed off by the authorities; the infection spreads; and those trapped inside are left to fight for survival.

Like the best comedians, the film has an immaculate sense of timing, with all the shock scares perfectly positioned. The final moments acknowledge the debt to its predecessor explicitly – while *Blair Witch* descended into a dark basement, [REC] ascends to a hellish penthouse where the female protagonist unravels into snot-nosed terror just as totally as *Blair Witch*’s Heather. The effect is every bit as blood-freezing.

An English-language remake, *Quarantine*, inevitably followed. Although having a recognisable face like *Dexter*’s Jennifer Carpenter as the lead creates a barrier to total immersion, it’s a perfectly acceptable remount, but unless you’re illiterate there’s absolutely no excuse not to watch the original and read the subs.



20

RETURN OF THE
BLIND DEAD

1973  DIRECTOR: AMANDO DE OSSORIO

In this follow-up to 1971’s *Tombs Of The Blind Dead* (see 9), the undead Templar Knights rise from the grave for a second shamble, with their backstory given a reboot. Here, they return as villagers celebrating the anniversary of their victory over the knights. Well, that’s just asking for it.

Amando de Ossorio doesn’t mess with the formula. Several actors return as different characters. There’s another love triangle, between the self-serving Mayor, his fiancée, and her ex Jack Marlowe, a hunk in a John Motson sheepskin who looks more like a catalogue model than the visiting pyrotechnics expert he is. There’s more slow-mo horseback pursuit, and one troubling point is cleared up with the revelation that the knights’ nags are as undead and eyeless as their riders – though that does still leave the question of where they appear from (are there some empty horse-graves somewhere?).

The film proceeds to a *Night Of The Living Dead*-style siege as the survivors hole up in the local church. It’s a daft affair, though, since the Dead simply stand outside waiting for our heroes to flee, which they obligingly do! If they had the good sense to stay put, they’d all survive.

The *Blind Dead* films have been read as a stealth critique on General Franco’s ruling regime, and *Return* provides the strongest evidence for this. The Mayor is a venal authority figure, concerned more with self-preservation than his people’s safety. In one astonishing sequence, he convinces a little girl that her daddy “has cakes for her across the street” to create a diversion as he sneaks away! An eminently hissable panto villain, he’s one of the series’ chief delights.



Nightmare City’s budget didn’t extend to teaching correct shaving technique.



19

NIGHTMARE CITY

1980  DIRECTOR: UMBERTO LENZI

If you’re the sort of purist zombiephile who doesn’t approve of putting *28 Days Later* in this list, you’re not going to like the inclusion of this Italian production either. Like Danny Boyle’s *Infected*, the creatures of *Nightmare City* are a) fast-moving and b) not actually dead. As if this weren’t enough, they’re also surprisingly dextrous and cunning, being capable of firing guns, cutting telephone lines and even landing an aeroplane! In our defence, we cite the following points: they have messed-up faces; are partial to tearing out their victim’s throats; and can only be killed by “bullets damaging the cranium”.

After a radioactive spill at a nuclear plant, an unmarked Hercules military plane makes an unscheduled landing at an airport. What follows is an orgy of violence, as bloodthirsty maniacs rush out clubbing, stabbing and shooting the responding emergency services, passing on the contamination. Soon it’s spreading all across the city.

Nightmare City is shameless exploitation trash. Director Umberto Lenzi is probably best known for *Cannibal Ferox*, banned in the UK as a video nasty, and he exercises a

similar level of restraint and decorum here. The tone is set early on, when the radioactive maniacs invade a TV studio where leotard-clad dancers are cutting a rug to some saxophone-heavy disco; it’s like watching zombies let loose on a vintage *Top Of The Pops* and proceeding to slaughter Legs & Co. The female victims generally have their blouses torn open for the titillation of male viewers, before being stabbed in the chest. It’s reprehensible filth, of course, and turning it off would be a perfectly right-minded liberal response.

And yet... if you did, you’d miss all manner of glorious insanity. The bursts of Ed Wood-style exposition. The bewildering circular ending, which may remind some of one of those Spike Milligan sketches where, in the absence of a punchline, he just shuffled out of the frame. The zombie make-ups, which look as if they’ve been coated in superglue, then had the contents of a Hoover bag emptied over their head. Worst of all, you’d miss the thrilling sequence in which the hero journalist of the piece (played by Hugo Stiglitz, a man with the weary thousand-yard stare of someone who’s lived a dozen lifetimes) escapes from some zombies by running up a rollercoaster, lobbing hand grenades and merrily blazing away with a machine-gun as he goes. Incidentally, if the name Hugo Stiglitz sounds familiar, it’s probably because it was also the name of the Nazi-killing German in Quentin Tarantino’s *Inglourious Basterds*. There’s the final, conclusive proof of *Nightmare City*’s cult status for you: QT adores it.



Who says things
can't be scary
without Technicolor?

18

I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE

1943 🇺🇸 DIRECTOR: JACQUES TOURNEUR

Ignore the silly, sensationalist title forced upon producer Val Lewton's second horror movie for RKO Pictures, as even today *I Walked With A Zombie* stands as one of the eeriest, most understated and downright creepy zombie movies ever made.

Released in the midst of the very real horrors of WW2, the film was the second collaboration between Lewton and director Jacques Tourneur, following the success of *Cat People*. That film was such a smash, in fact, that (title aside) Lewton was given almost complete creative freedom on *I Walked*, retooling the script as a loose adaptation of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* rather than the *American Weekly Magazine* article on which it was originally based.

Canadian nurse Betsy (Frances Dee) is hired by plantation owner Paul Holland (Tom Conway) to care for his braindead wife Jessica on a Caribbean island. Paul's half-brother Wesley Rand (James Ellison) is also in love with Jessica, and blames Paul for her current state. After traditional

medicine fails to cure Jessica, Betsy turns to the island's local voodoo community who discover, to their consternation, that Jessica is one of the living dead.

I Walked With A Zombie went unappreciated by the press of the day (the *New York Times* describing it as "a dull, disgusting exaggeration of an unhealthy, abnormal concept of life") but has been recognised as one of RKO and Lewton's most elegant, poetic and atmospheric movies in the years since. It doesn't deal in gore (or many scares, for that matter), but has an unsettling air, as well as one of the most unforgettable scenes in horror movie history, as Betsy stumbles across the towering, bug-eyed creature Carre-Four in a field of canes.

Though simple and efficient as a piece of storytelling, it's sufficiently ambiguous that you could reasonably question whether it qualifies as a zombie movie at all. Local West Indian superstition, the pervasive voodoo rhythms heard across the island and apparent mind control say yes, but there are doubts raised over whether Jessica is actually suffering from tropical fever.

The languid pace, monochrome cinematography and theatrical performances typical of the period may all act as a deterrent to modern viewers, but they shouldn't. Even with a title worthy of the dustbin of history, *I Walked With A Zombie* is a classy example of the genre pre- the Romero revolution. **Jordan Farley**



17

THE HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY

1981 🇮🇹 DIRECTOR: LUCIO FULCI

Oak Mansion would present a serious challenge for any estate agent. Not only does it echo with strange scrapes and eerie creaks, but it has a most unusual talking point: a tombstone set in the floor. Oh, and an undying psychopath in the cellar.

This film can be summarised as a haunted house story in which the ghost has been replaced by a zombie. A couple and their young son, Bob, move into the titular New England abode. Unbeknownst to them, it was once inhabited by 19th century scientist Dr Freudstein, whose experiments into extending life caused him to be suspended from his profession. And Freudstein (or rather, the maggots-ridden, cannibalistic remnants of him) is still in residence.

As Lucio Fulci films go, *The House By The Cemetery* is about as traditional and explicable it gets – though there are many baffling, surreal details. The house seems to be alive, conspiring with Freudstein to trap his victims via broken floorboards or slamming doors. Sometimes, the cellar's full of hanging corpses and scattered body parts; other times, it's perfectly empty. And in echoes of *The Shining*, young Bob is somehow able to communicate with Mary, a girl from the past whom we see in old photos of the house.

Of course, this being a Fulci film, it's about 50 times more gruesome than *The Amityville Horror*. Amongst the gory highlights that led to it being banned in the UK as a video nasty are a young woman getting stabbed through the head; a vicious attack by a (very fake-looking) giant bat; and an estate agent being brutally stabbed to death with a poker. Ideal viewing if you've just gone through the trauma of selling your house, then...



GIOVANNI FREZZA

BOB IN *THE HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY*

Can you share some memories of Lucio Fulci from the making of *The House By The Cemetery*?

Lucio Fulci could usually be found screaming at his cast and crew. People were terrified of him. I don't know if he was acting this way to create a tension among us that would show on the screen. I even remember crying during the making of it...

Were Catriona MacColl and Paolo Malco, who played your parents in the film, quite protective of you?

Yes, very much! I remember Catriona MacColl being very, very sweet with me. Paolo Malco was a nice guy to be around. He was always smiling, trying to take care of me.

How did you feel when you had to be chased by the film's horrific zombie, Dr Freudstein?

It wasn't so bad, probably because I got to see the character getting created, being made up layer by layer – the mask, the make-up, the arms, the latex... everything.

How did your own parents feel about you acting in a film like this?

They didn't really think about it because I got involved in acting quite accidentally. I was discovered by an agent while walking around Rome with my family. After that, I made some commercials, and that led to *The House By The Cemetery*.

My parents' attitude was always "this is fine" – they saw it as a bit of fun. However, after *The House By The Cemetery* I became the most requested child actor in Italy, and my mother said it would be better if I thought about another career.

Today I work in marketing and live in Chicago, so it's a very different life!

Calum Waddell

THE TOP 66 ZOMBIE FILMS



Hmm... I swear something looks different around these parts.

16

28 DAYS LATER

2002 DIRECTOR: DANNY BOYLE

Yes, we know *28 Days Later*'s rage-infected fiends aren't *technically* zombies. They don't eat brains, they're running about like ADD-addled kids on a diet of pixie sticks – and they're not even dead. But the film's importance in kick-starting the latest wave of zombie movies, and its ground-up reinvention of the genre, make it a work we'd be foolish to ignore.

In what seems like a nod to *The Day Of The Triffids* (although the filmmakers protest ignorance of Wyndham's opening), it begins with bicycle courier Jim (Cillian Murphy) waking from a coma in an abandoned hospital. Stumbling around the streets of an ominously empty London, Jim soon learns it's best to steer clear of red-eyed psychopaths, and is rescued by several survivors. A radio broadcast claiming to know the "answer to infection" prompts them to make the risky journey to an army blockade near

Manchester, where they find evidence that the world doesn't need a virus to bring out the worst in humanity.

Shot on harsh, kinetic digital video, with a story that has tough messages about human nature, *28 Days Later* is a physically draining and emotionally punishing experience. In the past, the greatest threat zombies presented had generally been their overwhelming numbers. Not so here: just one rage victim is enough to ensure instant bowel evacuation. Controversial, perhaps, but one truer to the way zombies have continually evolved to reflect societal concerns throughout the history of zombie cinema. In the early 20th century it was fear of outsiders and their strange rituals. George Romero's jackpot idea was to capitalise on nuclear paranoia. Boyle's film touches on a contemporary terror – viral outbreak and contagion being real concerns in the early 21st century.

It's also a social commentary, in a way that arguably Romero's films no longer are, with the rage virus an on-the-nose metaphor for the contemporary phenomenon of social rage (road, air, iPhone autocorrect, you name it). Innovatively shot, with phenomenal performances and an uncompromising script, *28 Days Later* is a blistering piece of horror cinema.

Jordan Farley



Undead? Nope – but the "zombies" in *28 Days Later* are still pretty scary.

15

DELLAMORTE DELLAMORTE

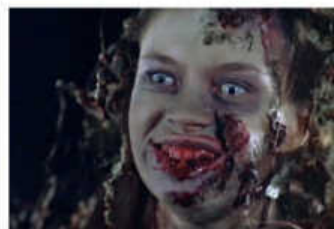
1994 DIRECTOR: MICHELE SOAVI

The only way to make sense of this freewheeling black comedy-cum-gothic romance (released on DVD as *Cemetery Man*) is to approach much of it as a strange dream. Trouble is, it's difficult to identify when protagonist Francesco Dellamore (a wonderfully out-of-place Rupert Everett) falls asleep (or enters a waking nightmare). It may happen after he's bitten by a zombie, but perhaps he slips into madness earlier. Or maybe it *all* unfolds in his head.

One thing's certain: no other film features a character who's quite so blasé about the business of offing the undead. Laconic slacker Dellamore is the caretaker in a cemetery where (for reasons never explained) the dead return on the seventh night after their death. When they do, Dellamore dispatches them with practiced ease, at one point pausing briefly mid-phone call to blast one in the head, before continuing with his casual chat.

The film ticks so many boxes. It has scenes of eroticism, as Dellamore and a widow (the stunningly beautiful Anna Falchi) make love on her husband's tombstone; quotable lines ("The only thing that's not shitty is sleep") – many of which occur during Everett's narration, sleepily mumbled as if he's just been pitched out of bed; and some amusingly quirky zombies (at one point we see a zombie boy scout who's furiously rubbing a stick in his palms!).

Explaining the plot is quite impossible; the script was based on a tale by Italian *fumetti* writer Tiziano Sclavi, but often feels like it was composed by many hands using the exquisite corpse method. The only thing you really need to know is that every baffling moment of it is utterly fascinating.



SERGIO STIVALETTI MAKE-UP ARTIST ON *DELLAMORTE DELLAMORTE*

How did you become involved?

I had worked with the director Michele Soavi on two other films: *The Church* and *The Sect*. We had also worked together on movies such as *Demons* – where he was the assistant director – so we were quite good friends by that time. It also represented a step away from Dario Argento, who had produced Michele's previous two movies. So I think having me do the special effects at least provided one reassuring and trustworthy face!

What were your influences when it came to creating the zombies?

I'm a big fan of Tom Savini and I enjoyed his book *Grande Illusions*, where he revealed how he created the zombies of *Dawn Of The Dead*. So I took some inspiration from him, but perhaps because we are European, our overall influences in that film were different. I think that the zombies are a little unique. They are not the same as the Romero or Fulci zombies, and that was my goal: to create a new design.

The film represents the end of an era: after it, horror films from Italy were few and far between and relied more on digital trickery.

Yes, this is true, and I found myself working with digital effects on stuff like Dario Argento's *The Phantom Of The Opera*, which came only shortly after *Dellamorte Dellamore*. The big problem was that *Dellamorte Dellamore* was not a big success when it was released, and by that time there hadn't been a huge Italian horror hit for years. I wonder if that discouraged a lot of potential producers...

Calum Waddell

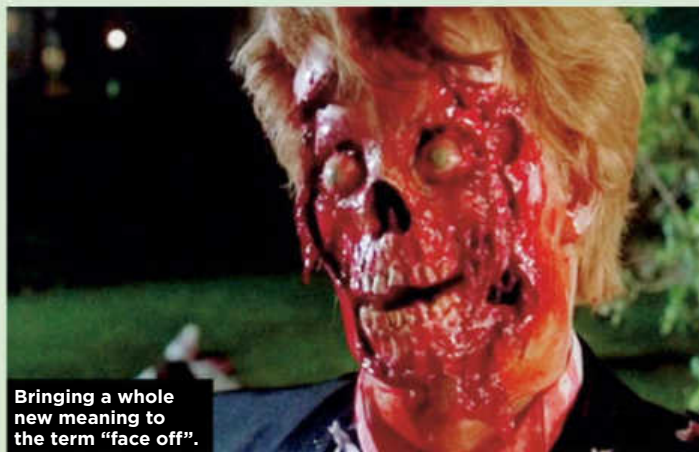
14

NIGHT OF THE CREEPS

1986  DIRECTOR: FRED DEKKER

Why the hell this film isn't more critically lauded is a mystery. It didn't hit DVD until 2010, and over here in the UK we're still waiting for a region two release. It's a crying shame, because *Night Of The Creeps* delivers everything you could want from an '80s horror-comedy.

Writer/director Fred Dekker (who went on to create another cult favourite, 1987's *The Monster Squad*) weds a tribute to the SF and horror films he watched as a kid to the teen movies typical of his contemporary John Hughes. The film kicks off with a black-and-white prologue set in the '50s, riffing on *The Blob* and its ilk as an alien capsule falls to Earth. It then jumps forward to the present day, unleashing parasitic slugs that



Bringing a whole new meaning to the term "face off".

leap into their victims' mouths and lay eggs in their brains into a world of rolled-up sleeves and sorority house pranks. Elements of slasher flicks and alien invasion movies are also added to the mix.

It's a very knowing, self-aware film – the local university is named after B-movie king Roger Corman, and characters have surnames such as Romero, Cronenberg and Carpenter; dialogue such as, "What is this, a homicide or a bad B-movie?" makes an appearance, and at one point *Plan 9 From Outer Space* is seen on TV.

It's also utterly charming. That's largely down to the central pairing of lovesick moper Chris (Jason Lively, Chevy Chase's son in *National Lampoon's European Vacation*) and JC, his wisecracking buddy – and how often do you see a movie in which the heroes are a ginger dork and a guy who needs crutches to get around? But the show is stolen by Tom Atkins as Ray Cameron, a hard-boiled, whisky-glugging police detective who begins practically every conversation by laconically spitting the catchphrase, "Thrill me!"



The climax, in which Chris and friends take on a coachload of tuxedoed zombie frat boys and a swarm of alien slugs armed with a flamethrower and a hovermower is an absolute hoot. True, some of the effects (such as a zombified dog) look a tad shonky nowadays, but since that just provides more amusement, it's all gravy. The '80s was the high point of the horror comedy. Goofy and cartoonish, with a punk rock edge and plenty of heart, *Night Of The Creeps* is one of the very best examples of its kind.

13

WILD ZERO

2000  DIRECTOR: TETSURO TAKEUCHI

Watching this Japanese alien-invasion zombie B-movie, you worry that everyone involved may have been sniffing on bags of UHU. It's a work of insane genius. It's the sort of film that makes you want to down a bottle of neat vodka, throw your television out of the window, set your house on fire, and pogo naked on the roof screaming "ROCK AND ROLL!!!" It should probably be banned as a menace to public order.

Shot in Thailand, it stars Guitar Wolf, lead singer of a cult Japanese garage rock band of the same name, and possibly the coolest man on Earth. Decked out in head-to-toe black leather and wraparound shades, guitar constantly slung over one shoulder, he wanders around dispensing nuggets of wisdom like "Rock'n'roll has no boundaries, nationalities or



Guitar Wolf – a man far too cool to be troubled by zombies, or by a lack of plot.

genders!" before screeching off on his customised motorbike, which makes more noise than a Boeing 737.

The story? A swarm of flying saucers is heading to Earth. Simultaneously, zombies start roaming the streets. Presumably these two events are connected, but quite how (or why) is never spelled out. Our guess is that the aliens got stoned the night before, watched *Plan 9 From Outer Space* and thought "hey, cool plan!". Among the freaks getting caught up in the ensuing chaos are the band; their deranged former

manager; an Amazonian arms dealer; Ace, a wide-eyed rocker who is Guitar Wolf's number one fan; and Tobio, the "dream girl" he meets along the way. Who is actually a bloke. We think.

The plot is wafer-thin, and one suspects the script was written in crayon by someone recently lobotomised – but these factors are unimportant. The outrageously over-the-top setpieces make it all worthwhile. Typically these involve Guitar Wolf hollering "ROCK AND ROLL!!!" before slaughtering zombies by, say, hurling guitar picks at them



like they are shuriken, while his two sidekicks (Bass Wolf and, er, Drum Wolf) nonchalantly comb their monstrous rockabilly quiffs.

Howling with guitar feedback, reeking of Brylcreem, and dripping with putrid fragments of zombie brain, *Wild Zero* is heroically dumb – but also sweetly good-natured, with a skewed romanticism. Essential viewing for Ramones fans, lovers of drive-in trash, and anyone who worries that they have far too many brain cells and would like to swiftly eradicate a few billion.

THE TOP 66 ZOMBIE FILMS



The lousiest kisser on Earth? *Braindead* ramps up the grossness.

12

BRAINDEAD

1992 DIRECTOR: PETER JACKSON

It would probably come as a shock to the majority of multiplex-flocking *Lord Of The Rings* fans that almost two decades ago Peter Jackson made the goriest zombie film ever. And *Braindead* has retained its ability to make you gasp and hoot at ever-decreasing intervals.

At heart, it's very much a heightened, farcical comedy which owes as much to *Fawlty Towers* and *Monty Python* as it does Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* or George Romero's apocalyptic tales. *Braindead*'s actors are never happier than when widening their eyeholes to the size of saucers and attempting to devour the scenery. Sometimes literally.

Lionel Cosgrove is an Oedipal man-child who struggles to escape his mother's overbearing shadow after meeting the lovely Paquita. If it hadn't been for a prologue involving bodily dismemberment you'd be forgiven for

expecting this to be a sappy love story. Then Mum gets bitten by a Sumatran rat-monkey at the zoo and slowly turns into a ravenous zombie. As the virus spreads, *Braindead* distinguishes itself from other films of its ilk by having Lionel attempt to keep the (un)dead firmly under wraps, calling to mind one of Basil Fawlt's finest hours.

Admittedly the self-consciously corny humour drops the ball from time to time, but this is certainly not the case when it comes to the bloodshed. *Braindead*'s OTT violence is jaw-dropping. The often brilliant prosthetics are a sobering reminder of the value of puppetry over pixels. The director and his cast are revelling in the red stuff; while this was a low-budget movie, everyone went the extra mile. The indelible images come thick and fast: a zombie's head lit from within by a light bulb, a head in a blender, a zombie baby bursting out of someone's face... and best of all, a massacre scene involving one man, hordes of zombies and a lawnmower.

Braindead is so much fun it should be illegal. It was pleasing to find that, come 2005, Jackson hadn't begun to regard his creation as a dirty secret: at one point during *King Kong*, in the Venture's cargo hold, we spot a container labelled "Sumatran Rat Monkey". **Jason Arnopp**



Repairing one's zombie ma with glue: some things are just destined to fail.

11

DAY OF THE DEAD

1985 DIRECTOR: GEORGE ROMERO

This may be George Romero's favourite of his original *Dead* trilogy, but it's not that of many Romero fans. It's easy to see why: *Dawn Of The Dead* had moments of jollity and triumph, but *Day* is an unremitting downer.

A small group of scientists, soldiers and civilians are holed up in an underground base. Many are cracking under the pressure. As their different viewpoints clash, there's endless bickering. Meetings descend into obscenity-littered shouting matches, then threats to kill. Humanity, stripped of social restraints, is far more terrifying than the zombies.

Joe Pilato is almost *too* good as the bad guy, unblinking fascist Captain Rhodes (literally unblinking – Pilato could be a world champion starrer). If you found yourself in a pub with this guy, you'd scarper for fear of an arbitrary glassing.

The one light spot is Bub, a smarter-than-average zombie whom maniacal scientist Dr Logan is trying to domesticate; his innocent reactions to, say, being played Beethoven's *Ode To Joy* are priceless. It's an impressive piece of physical acting by Howard Sherman. The film also features some of effects maestro Tom Savini's best work – all manner of horribly gruesome amputation, eye gouging and intestine ripping.

But the unrelenting nihilism can be a little too much to bear; the only relief comes from playing Spot the Novelty Zombie with undead majorettes and ballerinas. Racial epithets are thrown around, and the threat of rape hangs in the air. That's believable – if the zombie apocalypse happened, it would play out more like this than *Zombieland*.

But it also makes *Day* a film you need to live with and get accustomed to before you can fully appreciate its many fine qualities.



JOE PILATO

CAPTAIN RHODES IN
DAY OF THE DEAD

George Romero originally had a far bigger concept for the film but couldn't get the necessary funding.

Did he seem disappointed?

Not at all – in fact, myself and the other cast members had no idea that *Day Of The Dead* was originally going to be this big-budget epic. George is an extraordinary director – he knows what he wants, and he's an actor's dream. We got up at four every morning to do *Day Of The Dead* and George was always the first person on the set. He was always smiling too – he's just such a great guy.

Was it fun to play such an unpleasant character?

Absolutely! Villains always have the upper hand and actors love playing them. George gave Rhodes a strong point of view that was fairly easy to bring to life. My approach was that, once upon a time, he'd probably been a real prick of a military man... but by the time he'd got to the cave, and the zombies had started spreading, he'd just lost it!

When the film came out did people cross the street to avoid you?

Once or twice! Most female horror fans are still scared to ask for my autograph, but once they get to know me they see I'm nothing like Rhodes. I get a lot of police officers coming up to me at conventions. One cop told me that my picture was hanging in their squad house!

What do you remember most about Rhodes being pulled apart?

Just the smell. I was unsure how Tom Savini and Greg Nicotero were going to do that scene – and then I was told they were using pig guts. I thought, "Where are they going to get the pig guts from?" My ex-wife was very happy when she saw that sequence!

Calum Waddell

10

DEATHDREAM

1974 🇨🇦 DIRECTOR: BOB CLARK

Zombie filmmakers don't have much in the way of respectable literary forebears. Tellers of ghost stories can invoke M. R. James, and directors of vampire flicks can claim a lineage back to Bram Stoker. The nearest the zombie genre comes is W. W. Jacobs's 1902 short story "The Monkey's Paw", in which a grief-crazed mother uses the titular talisman to wish her son back to life; he turns up at her door, but in a horribly rotted state. *Deathdream* takes this classic tale and yokes it to the Vietnam War, like a supernaturally themed cousin of *Coming Home*.

The mother of Andy Brooks greets the telegram about her son's death in combat with anguished denial, muttering the words, "You will come back." Sure enough, he does... but as a tightly wound ball of trauma with a blazing thousand-yard stare.



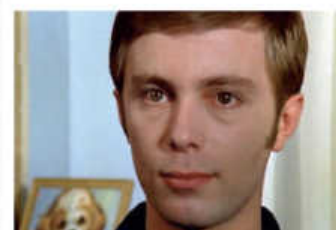
Richard Backus brings home the horror of war – and then some – in *Deathdream*.

Uncommunicative and impassive, with a murderous need for blood, Andy's seen things that his parents could never understand, and will – like thousands of veterans – never be the same again...

The use of the zombie as a metaphor for post-traumatic shock and the familial disintegration that can follow in its wake is highly effective, but despite its socially-conscious approach, *Deathdream* isn't an overly worthy film. Thanks to Richard Backus, who gives Andy a laser-eyed intensity and the smile of a sadistic dentist,

it's seriously chilling too. A sequence where he lies in wait for the family doctor and stabs him to death, is almost painfully suspenseful. Carl Zittler's score is appealingly leftfield too: half of it sounds like someone making noises with their mouth; the rest brings to mind a man frantically trying to escape from the inside of a piano.

Director Bob Clark and writer Alan Ormsby previously collaborated on 1973's *Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things* (see 35). *Deathdream* is a more serious-minded piece of work, but shares some of its predecessor's



quirkiness. Oddball secondary characters – like a barman who's disgusted by the word "nuptials", and a postman who blathers on about a dog puking on his sweater – provide humorous respite from the grim reality of Andy's condition.

Three decades later, Joe Dante drew from the same well with "Homecoming", an episode of the *Masters Of Horror* series in which, once again, undead soldiers return from a distant war (this time Iraq). That's a first-rate piece of TV drama – but *Deathdream* is better.

9

TOMBS OF THE BLIND DEAD

1971 🇪🇸 DIRECTOR: AMANDO DE OSSORIO

Over the course of four films, Amando de Ossorio's *Blind Dead* established themselves as Spain's most significant contribution to the zombie genre – despite making Romero's trundling ghouls look like Usain Bolt.

These former Knights Templar took part in satanic rituals, supping the blood of virgins to achieve eternal life. Strung up for their crimes, they had their eyes pecked out by crows. Now their desiccated, sword-wielding cadavers shuffle along with almost infinite slowness, using sound alone to hunt those foolish enough to visit the deserted ruins of their medieval village. In a unique twist, they also pursue their prey on horseback. These sequences, which play out in slow-mo, are wonderfully eerie – if you can push



Lie back and think of undead knights: de Ossorio's *Blind Dead* blends horror and sex.

the question of where the horses came from to the back of your mind...

Tombs was made at the fag-end of Franco's authoritarian rule. Some readings present it as a slyly subversive text, with the Templars representing the ruling regime – but one suspects this might be rather over-interpreting matters. The film was a product of a time when audiences across the continent were demanding horror spiced with both sex and violence, and Ossorio duly obliges (although thanks to the conservative Spanish censors, his countrymen wouldn't have seen

much of it at the time). Sometimes the results amuse, particularly a flashback to some schoolgirl lesbianism: since the character having the flashback is on a train, hands stray to a soundtrack of steam engine chuffing, as smoke drifts through the bedroom; you half expect an inspector to walk in and punch their tickets. Other scenes are decidedly *not* amusing: late on, one Latin stud decides to "cure" a lesbian character by forcing himself on her. The sequence has no good reason to exist.

Still, there's so much to admire about this film, that even that discomforting



sequence can't ruin it. There are some magnificently atmospheric setpieces, chief among them one in which a zombie wanders a workshop full of mannequins, lit by a flashing red light (it's explained, hilariously, that there's a neon light workshop upstairs!). The sound design also deserves special mention: every smallest noise is ominously amplified, from the ghostly rumbling of the earth as the knights rise from their graves, to the echoing footfalls of those spectral horses – whoever was in charge of bashing the coconuts deserves some sort of gong.

8

DAWN OF THE DEAD

2004  DIRECTOR: ZACK SNYDER

The indications weren't promising: another lazy, pointless remake, directed by some wet-behind-the-ears commercials director (Zack Snyder), scripted by the genius behind *Scooby-Doo* (James Gunn). But against the odds, this "re-envisioning" of George Romero's '79 classic turned out to be exhilarating, gripping, and laugh-out-loud funny – and is arguably a movie on a par with the original.

The basic set-up remains the same, with a group of disparate characters holing up in a shopping mall to escape a zombie apocalypse. Key lines of dialogue are sampled, and there are cameos by original stars Ken Foree, Scott Reiniger and Tom Savini, but otherwise the new *Dawn* goes its own way, with wit, style and invention.

Conclusive proof that being undead and feasting on corpses is an unhealthy lifestyle.



The devastating prologue shows the zombie outbreak enveloping a sleepy corner of suburbia. Within moments, nurse Ana's husband and daughter are trying to bite chunks out of her, houses are burning, and cars are crashing and exploding as people flee for their lives. From here on in, *Dawn* never loses sight of the fact that this national disaster is an accumulation of thousands upon thousands of individual tragedies.

Unlike *Resident Evil*, *Dawn* features all the exploding heads and chainsaw carnage a gorehound could wish

for, utilising CGIed oceans of extras and huge explosions that were way beyond the meagre budget. The action scenes are impressively tense, and the fact that these zombies can *sprint* helps to amp up the sense of urgency and prevents them becoming mere figures of fun. The film's mordant sense of humour also impresses. It's stuffed with quotable lines, many of which fall from the mouth of self-serving cynic Steve – it's like having a more embittered version of Chandler from *Friends* stranded in a horror flick.



If we have one criticism, it's that the retooled *Dawn* mutes the satirical attack on consumer culture of Romero's original. But, to be honest, that film's political depth has been exaggerated over the years, so this isn't as great a loss as some naysayers make out. A textbook example of why sometimes remakes are a good idea, Snyder's *Dawn Of The Dead* deserves to be bracketed with the likes of Cronenberg's *The Fly* and Carpenter's *The Thing*. Like both those films, it'll still be fondly remembered several decades from now.

7

MESSIAH OF EVIL

1971  DIRECTORS: WILLARD HUYCK & GLORIA KATZ

This ambiguous, dreamlike piece is what you get when people with an underground sensibility make a drive-in flick. It was written by husband-and-wife team Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz, who scripted *American Graffiti* and *The Temple Of Doom* for George Lucas. Other talents involved include cinematographer Stephen Katz (Gloria's brother) who later worked on films like *Gods & Monsters*, and future director Walter Hill, who cameos in the prologue as the lucky recipient of a throat-slashing from a young girl.

Arletty (Marianna Hill) visits the coastal town of Point Dune, California, in search of her estranged father, an artist. He's vanished without trace, and his diary discusses strange visions and some "unspeakable evil" at work. Staying in his studio (whose walls



Makes a nice change from human flesh... it's feeding time in *Messiah Of Evil*.

are covered with sinister murals of watching figures), Arletty investigates the mystery with the assistance of three urbane out-of-towners: aristocratic "collector of legends" Thom (Michael Greer) and his two women companions.

What's happening to the townsfolk is unclear – are they zombies, possessed, or bewitched? A wino babbles of the "blood moon"; robed figures light fires out on the rocks; local legend tells of a "dark stranger" who visited a century ago and promised to return. Those affected bleed from the

eyes, are impervious to pain, and are prone to puking up maggots, as Arletty eventually discovers for herself...

It's a horror film with a self-consciously artistic air, not afraid of homaging Jean-Luc Godard or pronouncing portentous dialogue. Languid pacing and a whiff of pretension will deter some viewers, but even they'll admit that the zombie attack sequences are well-staged.

In one, we discover a group of locals clustered around the butcher's counter of the supermarket, tucking into raw meat. Another unfolds in a cinema, as



a woman watches a hokey Western. As the seats behind her slowly fill up with ghouls (with echoes of *The Birds*), it's phenomenally tense. When the reel spins to a close, she gets taken down in front of a blank white screen.

The film had a troubled birth: the workprint was taken out of Huyck and Katz's hands after investors sued the producers, then recut and scored by other hands. Luckily, they didn't completely wreck it. Supremely atmospheric and brimming with surreal imagery, it's a largely forgotten horror classic that we urge you to find.

6

THE LIVING DEAD AT THE MANCHESTER MORGUE

1974  DIRECTOR: JORGE GRAU

Much of the pleasure of this film (aka *Let Sleeping Corpses Lie*) comes from seeing the undead wandering around the grey landscape of '70s Britain – all *Joy Of Sex* beards, cardigans and Minis – as if they've accidentally lurched into an early Mike Leigh film.

As those classic zombie attack scenes are restaged in NHS hospitals and country churches, you can't help feeling a surge of patriotic pride. How can you resist a zombie flick where the central characters are called George and Edna, and the first response to a zombie killing is to give the widow a cuppa and some bourbons? Funny, then, that this



quintessentially British film is actually an Italian/Spanish co-production, shot by a Spanish director.

For once, the cause of the outbreak is clear: an experimental machine being tested by the Department of Agriculture, which uses ultrasound to kill insects and parasites (despite the title, the bulk of the film takes place in the Lake District – and was shot in the Peak District!).

These zombies are fast-moving and strong. Director Jorge Grau recorded their groans himself, drawing on the memory of the day his father died:



when Grau Sr's body was moved from a sitting position to lying down, a wheeze of dead man's breath came out...

It's clearly a cheap film: there are never more than three zombies on screen at once, and their make-up basically consists of red contact lenses and white face paint. But it's well-paced, imaginatively shot, and features some convincingly nasty gore. This led to it being included on the list of video nasties, although it's rumoured that some of the film's initial seizures were driven as much by its portrayal of the police as inept and bigoted.

The characterisation is sublime. The hero is a sort of camp Mancunian Robin Askwith, while Arthur Kennedy is perfect as a police inspector with a chip on his shoulder about hippy types with "long hair and faggot clothes".

For Brits, the reason the film was set in the UK is amusing. According to director Grau, "The producer felt that Manchester seemed a distant, mysterious place – even the name." Maybe it took a bunch of outsiders who found three-day-week-era Britain *exotic* to make it into such a successful movie location.

5

THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

1985  DIRECTOR: DAN O'BANNON

Featuring a stripping punkette, reanimated butterflies and the phrase "rabid weasels", *The Return Of The Living Dead* is light years from its illustrious forebear, *Night Of The Living Dead*. But even though it radically rewrites the rules, both in terms of tone and the basic "facts" about zombies, it's not a film that besmirches Romero's legacy – it simply strikes out in a completely different direction.

The project began as a script by *Night Of The Living Dead* co-writer John Russo, but ended up, in the hands of *Alien* co-writer Dan O'Bannon, as something completely different: an overtly humorous, often slapstick take on zombies.

We're told that *Night Of The Living Dead* was inspired by a real-



life incident, caused by a spillage of 245 Trioxin, an experimental US military chemical. After a mislaid barrel leaks Trioxin gas, the staff of a medical supply warehouse, their mortician neighbour and a gang of partying punks are caught up in a fresh outbreak.

O'Bannon's film showed (along with *Nightmare City* – see 19) that the undead can be fast-moving without diluting their menace (even more radically, destroying the brain doesn't work, and the zombies can both reason and speak). It popularised



the notion that they love to feast on brains, and also proved that flesh-eating zombies can be a suitable subject for humour.

Then there's Linnea Quigley. When Quigley's death-obsessed punkette Trash disrobed, gyrating on a tomb to the strains of hair metal, it provided countless pimply gorehounds with their sexual awakening – and the actress with an enduring career as a scream queen.

This is a film studded with moments of delicious jet-black comedy: our heroes have to contend with

reanimated half-dogs and bin bags full of wriggling body parts, and after paramedics are ambushed by zombies, one of the undead picks up the ambulance radio and requests, "Send more paramedics!"

But it isn't just a goofy chuckle-fest. When a rotted half-corps explains her hunger for brains – eating them numbs the terrible pain of being dead – it's surprisingly touching. Add harrowing transformations for likeable characters and a none-more-bleak ending and you have a zom-com that's a flavoursome blend of sweet and sour.

4

SHAUN OF THE DEAD

2004  DIRECTOR: EDGAR WRIGHT

Sometimes, you have to leave home to get the respect you deserve. George Romero was delighted with this comedic riff on his *Dead* films. Tarantino recently listed it as one of the best 20 films of the last 17 years. It certainly deserves effusive praise.

The cleverness of the script only fully makes itself known over time. And we're not just talking about the fanboy-pleasing references to, say, director Lucio Fulci or *Dawn Of The Dead*'s Ken Foree, delightful though they are to spot.

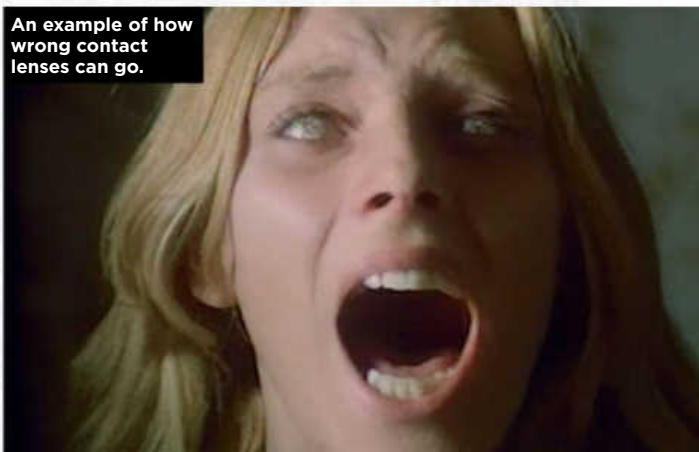
Shaun Of The Dead is a film that's crammed with premonitions and echoes, both visual and verbal. Some are extremely subtle, such as an early line of dialogue that synthesises what's to follow: "A Bloody Mary... A bite... Back at the bar for shots." Sure enough, our heroes find a zombie called Mary in their garden, people get bitten and they end up fighting off the undead hordes with a shotgun. This kind of thing ensures that *Shaun* gets even better on repeat viewings.

It's a hilarious film, but is sometimes harrowing too, particularly when our hero is faced with having to blow his mother's brains out. This ability to deliver an emotional gut-punch lifts it above the zom-coms that came in its wake. As one of those middle-class mums who "doesn't like to make a fuss", Penelope Wilton almost steals the film. But Simon Pegg doesn't get enough credit for his acting chops.

If we have one tiny criticism, it's that the "rom" part of this movie's rom-zom-com formula falls short. Effectively given the straight man role, Kate Ashfield struggles to make us love Liz the way that Shaun does. And why doesn't he get to kiss the girl at the end, for chrissake?



An example of how wrong contact lenses can go.



3

THE BEYOND

1981  DIRECTOR: LUCIO FULCI

As former nasties are recuperated into the canon, many '80s horrors are now being dubbed "oneiric" by modern-day critics. This one – Italian director Lucio Fulci's finest work – is the most deserving of such a pretentious label.

Incoherent to the point of disintegration, it's a frustratingly difficult film to explain to others. Some will share star Catriona MacColl's initial appraisal of the script: outrageous gore strung together by a bunch of nonsense...

MacColl plays Liza Merrill, who's renovating a New Orleans hotel that she's inherited from her uncle. Unbeknown to her – and posing a serious threat to her chances of winning a star rating – it's built on a gateway to Hell. What follows is best summarised like this: weird shit happens. This mostly involves atrocities committed to the human body, filmed in loving close-up. One

woman has her face melted off by acid; the resulting glop oozes across a morgue floor towards her fear-frozen daughter's feet, like a malevolent wave of strawberry yoghurt. Another unfortunate has her head jammed onto a rusty nail so hard that an eyeball pops out with the force of a Thai sex worker demonstrating her dexterity with a ping-pong ball.

In the standout moment of insanity, an unfortunate chap has his face nibbled off by a scuttle of killer tarantulas. Why? We have no idea. By the time zombies emerge en masse, lumbering around the corridors of the local hospital, a simple outbreak of the undead seems pretty unremarkable.

A friendly doctor (David Warbeck, a male lead so wonderfully of his time that you can practically smell the Brut) strives without success to provide rational explanations. It's all utterly incomprehensible, and breathtakingly so. That's especially true in the latter stages, when Fulci gleefully discards any last vestige of logic, mapping geographically distant locations on to one another and marooning his leads in a marrow-freezing Hellscape that would, were you dreaming it, jerk you bolt upright in bed. All this makes *The Beyond* as close as you can come to having a very unpleasant nightmare while staying fully conscious.



Fulci's zombies: always on the look-out for a lost pound coin.



CATRIONA MACCOLL

LIZA MERRIL IN
THE BEYOND

How did a nice girl like you get involved in Italian horror?

That's a good question! I had actually never seen a horror movie in my life. I wasn't into that sort of thing, and probably wouldn't have done them either. However, what reassured me was that the Italian film industry revered Lucio Fulci, even though the critics did not. I think that's part of why he was able to assemble so many great Italian technicians and actors for his horror films.

What's the secret to a really good scream?

I just let it all hang out! When I'm faced with a challenge, I like to do it whole-heartedly, and I quickly realised that I was a good screamer. There's actually something liberating about screaming. I can understand why it's a technique in therapy!

What was Lucio Fulci like?

He was enigmatic and complicated, let me put it that way! We had a warm relationship of sorts – he wasn't a very emotional man, but there was a mutual respect between us. I knew that he really liked me, even if he never expressed it that often, and we shared a rather dark sense of humour. But nobody ever got to know Lucio.

You did three films with him – why didn't you do a fourth?

Lucio did ask me to make a fourth one, but it was *The New York Ripper*. I think I was quite fortunate in saying no, because I've been told that film wasn't as good as the ones we'd done previously. However, I didn't even read the script when it came to me – by that time, I was trying to do something else. I felt that I had screamed myself out.

Calum Waddell



© KOBAL

2

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

1968 🇺🇸 DIRECTOR: GEORGE ROMERO

What more is there to say about the daddy of modern zombie movies? Thousands of words have been written about its low-budget ingenuity, its forward-thinking casting, the socio-political subtexts that fester beneath the surface, and its influence on the filmmakers of today. And rightly so. But those essays often skip over one thing – arguably the most important factor in the film's success: it's a very scary movie.

Take the famous opening scene. A brother and sister leave flowers on a grave. Johnny is messing about;

dismissive. Barbra is more sensitive. He cracks some lame jokes and they bicker. And then a man wanders into shot. He's in the background, innocuous – until he attacks! It's a shocking moment precisely because Johnny has just made a gag about the possibility of this very occurrence. Our good-looking male lead has his skull smashed on a gravestone less than ten minutes into the movie.

The rest of *Night* is for the most part a humour-free zone, thick with the real-world paranoia of nuclear attack. The apocalypse survivors hide in a cellar, their only contact with the outside world coming in the form of news footage and doomy warnings to head for survival shelters.

Of course, there's a straightforward reason for this low-key approach. The film was made for a pittance, costing just \$114,000. Romero and chums simply couldn't afford the varied locations, zombie armies and helicopters that characterised later *Dead* movies. But in keeping things small scale, they made a cheap

movie that still looks good today. This no-fuss approach also extended to other parts of the film. In a bit of casting that proved unconsciously revolutionary, African-American Duane Jones was cast as the heroic Ben, which added a whole new level of political resonance to proceedings.

The film ends with a shrug of inevitability. Ben is the only survivor to make it through the night. Dawn breaks and then – pop! – a trigger-happy redneck clumsily shoots him in the head. His body is tossed onto a pyre to lie, in a piece of perfect symmetry, next to the zombie from that first graveyard scene. It's an ending that goes beyond bleak into blank nihilism. Humans may have won (for now...) but the implication is clear. The world has changed forever.

Night weathered poor reviews, and as the years passed its reputation grew. Its influence on every modern zombie movie and on low-budget filmmaking in general is hard to overstate. It is – in every sense – a bloody classic. **Will Salmon**



RUSSELL STREINER

CO-PRODUCER OF *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*

Legend has it that Night took some time to take off. Is that true?

No, it's absolutely false. From the outset we kept track of how the play dates were accumulating. A chain called Associated Theatres, based in Pittsburgh, played *Night* in 17 cinemas. That launched us. A guy called George Stern ran Associated Theatres and told us, the very first night of playing the film, "You boys are going to make \$1 million with this picture because we've never seen a turnout like this for what's basically a drive-in movie". He saw something special, so much so that he called other exhibitors all around the States and told them they had to book this movie. That spread through the business like wildfire.

Is it true that African-American areas rioted when Ben was killed?

I wouldn't say rioted, but I will confirm that it surprised the African-American audience as much as it did everyone else. The night the film opened, I saw it in a theatre that had a lot of African-American patrons.

They were totally involved with the film and upset when it ended... but not to the point of rioting. They were just vocally angry. But white audiences reacted just the same. Everyone was pulling for this guy to survive and he didn't. No film had done that before us.

When did you become aware that Night was being seen as part of a wave of violent, graphic US films?

I didn't pay attention to the movies that came after *Night*, but I was aware that we were breaking new ground. When the movie came out we experienced everything from hero worship to people thinking we were satanic. Some critics thought we'd made something with no redeeming social value. In 1968, this was a picture that divided people – in Philadelphia there was even a boycott when it was screened in a public library. The problem was, we did too good a job at scaring people!

Calum Waddell

**THE TOP 66
ZOMBIE FILMS**



1

DAWN OF THE DEAD

1979  DIRECTOR: GEORGE ROMERO

Americans sure do love shopping. In a 1995 survey of US teenagers, 92% named it as their favourite leisure activity; only 7% chose spending time with their friends and family.

It was a 1974 visit to the Monroeville mall outside Pittsburgh that inspired George Romero to make a horror film satirising America's obsession with consumerism. "We knew the guy who owned the place socially," recalled Romero. "One day, he gave me a tour of the behind-the-scenes shit... They had sealed-off rooms packed with civil defence stuff, which they had put there in the event of some disaster, and that's what gave me the idea. I mean, my god, here's this cathedral to consumerism, and it's also a bomb shelter just in case society crumbles!"

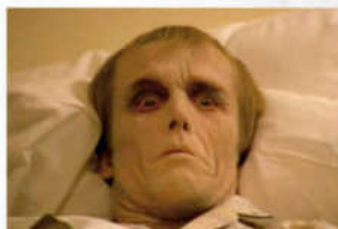
Three years later, Romero shot *Dawn Of The Dead* in the same mall. It was a tough shoot: a night shift that lasted for four months. The film follows two SWAT team members, a traffic reporter and his partner as they flee from a zombie apocalypse.



Landing their helicopter on the roof of a shopping mall, they realise that it contains everything they need, and set to work clearing out the undead.

For much of the time, a world overrun by zombies seems like a fun place to be. As our heroes hare around the shopping mall, blowing out undead brains, you're reminded of childhood games of soldiers. And did you ever daydream about winning one of those competitions where you dash round a supermarket filling up a trolley with goodies? *Dawn's* heroes live that dream.

Romero immerses his audience in this orgy of violence and consumption, making you vicariously share their exhilaration and decadent pleasure. Then he sours the dream. Once they've made the perfect nest, a luxury apartment crammed with goodies, they realise that all the material abundance – fine wines, expensive clothes – is hollow and worthless. It doesn't give them freedom. They've simply locked themselves in a massive gilded cage.



Nowadays, most horror films are witless, "just a thrill ride and not much more" as Romero himself once put it. *Dawn Of The Dead* is different; it hitches its action-adventure thrills to a neat metaphor.

The fact that zombies flock to the mall, unconsciously seeking out the familiarity of routine, suggests that consumerism is the panacea of the braindead. As they gormlessly ride escalators to the strains of goofy muzak, Romero's message is crystal clear: when we shop, we're not human beings, but mere consumers, minds set on autopilot, and little separates us from these dead-eyed vessels of "pure, motorised instinct".

Yet *Dawn* isn't just some dry, high-minded Marxist tract. It's a triumph because, just like the Monroeville mall, it's stocked with everything you could want: haunting moments of utter despair; exciting action, as our heroes dash about securing their new home; slapstick and farce, as the undead are pied in the face... It's zombie cinema's one-stop shop.



KEN FOREE

PETER IN
DAWN OF THE DEAD

What were you doing before Dawn Of The Dead?

I was a struggling off-Broadway actor, doing Shakespeare and things when suddenly, *Dawn Of The Dead* happened – though there was a hurdle about getting involved with it: I was a SAG [Screen Actors' Guild] actor and this was a non-union movie, so I knew I'd be in trouble if they found out.

How did you overcome that?

I didn't! I was the only SAG actor in the film. But I read the script and thought, "Oh my god, they're going to pull guts out of people?" So I doubted it was ever going to play in the US. I thought I'd be fine because I didn't believe they'd ever find out.

Were you aware of Night Of The Living Dead?

I knew Duane Jones, the star of the original *Night Of The Living Dead* – which is also one of my favourite films. He and I were in a New York theatre group – and no one knew about Duane's little horror film except me! Of course, *Night* had some guts being eaten and stuff, but it was in black and white, and I think that made it less shocking.

What was it like working with George Romero, and how was the experience of making the movie?

He let you know what he wanted but he gave you a huge amount of freedom – as the best directors do. I still see George, he's a fantastic guy. The cast were great too. It was my first lead movie role, and when it came out it was a phenomenon. I was interviewed by all the news stations: NBC, CBS, PBS, you name it – and every newspaper wanted to speak to me too. I had no conception that would happen.

Calum Waddell

BEHIND THE SCENES

WOLVES

A zombie with a bloody mouth is in the foreground, and a man is screaming in the background.

THE WALKING DEAD

SEASON SIX PART 1 OF
THE WALKING DEAD
PROMISES TO
“BLOW YOUR MIND”

JOSEPH McCABE
INVESTIGATES

AT THE

DOOR

After five seasons as executive producer of *The Walking Dead*, preceded by 30 years producing some of the most memorable genre films in history, Gale Anne Hurd isn't someone given to hyperbole. So when Hurd and her fellow E.P. Scott Gimple take time out of their hectic schedule to chat with us about the TV phenomenon's sixth season midway through its production, we have every reason to believe her when she tells us, "I think you'll find this season will blow your mind."

"Huge' and 'pedal to the metal' is probably how I would describe season six," says the veteran producer. "Both in terms of story and scale. We've got 18 regular cast members now. That's huge. And in terms of 'pedal to the metal', if you've seen our promo you know that our band of survivors, as big as they are now, are facing a huge threat from the walkers. We've lived in a world that was somewhat out in the sticks. There were a few walkers. But now we're really going to see a world that's been overtaken by them."

It's a world that leader Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln) finds himself increasingly at odds with after the season five finale. In perhaps the show's most shocking season finale yet, Rick – after being given shelter by a community of survivors in Alexandria, Virginia – killed a man in cold blood as he was reunited with his long lost friend Morgan Jones (Lennie James), the first survivor he encountered after waking from his coma. It's an act, Hurd says, that will have severe repercussions in *The Walking Dead*'s sixth year, possibly dividing the show's survivors between the men. Though she's quick to state that what's to come will be more complicated than the simple conflict that arises "whenever you have two strong characters".

"Let's not forget that you have the complication of Jessie's relationship with Rick," says Hurd, addressing the abused Alexandria survivor (Alexandra Breckenridge) whose husband Rick killed. "You have the complication of how her kids view that. You still have dissension within the ranks of people who really don't want to challenge how things are done in Alexandria with those who do. You've got the added complication of Father Gabriel. So there's still a lot more going on than just these two titans back together again."

MOVING ON UP

As for the Alexandria group's leader, Deanna Monroe (actress Tovah Feldshuh) who urged Rick to kill Jessie's husband after he took the life of her own, Hurd tells us to expect a different person when we see the former US Congresswoman again in season six.

"I think we left season five with a very much changed Deanna. In a moment her world was shaken. She believed in her core that her way, her approach – non-violent, 'Everything's going to

Some diets are too much.



Head to head?

work out', 'There doesn't need to be any intervention with Pete' – all of those chickens came home to roost. And now that she's lost Reg and basically told Rick, 'Kill Pete', she's certainly very much different from the Deanna that we first encountered. I think she sees now and has an acceptance of what Rick has lived, and his code. I don't know that she feels necessarily that all of her ambitions and goals for Alexandria are muted because of that, but I think she's incredibly shaken."

Walking Dead showrunner Gimple adds, "I think the big thing with the finale was that the jeopardy wasn't, 'Oh god, are they gonna kick Rick out?' It was, 'Oh god, are they gonna try to kick Rick out?' which would subsequently make

SURVIVOR TALK



"She really was keen to see this cohesion [between Rick's group and Alexandria]

happen. There has to be society in this world. There can't just be Terminus and the Governor. They can't be all this world has come to... The unfortunate thing that happens with Reg, with her sword, it causes her to end up in a place at the end of the season where I have to re-own that power because I don't trust anyone else's hands. She's still in Alexandria. Of course, she still wants them there, but she's taken the sword back."

DANAI GURIRA
MICHONNE



Well, that's inconvenient.



The face that launched a thousand fanfics.

SURVIVOR TALK



"The amount of fan art I get of me and Rick making out, it's magnificent! We should do a show

— an art show, a proper art show of the two of us in a bathtub together. It's insane. Are they looking for me to have a committed relationship with these people? Just to bone them? The truth is, I don't know that Daryl is ready to do any of that. It's almost the same as, 'You ever going to cut your hair on the show?' Why the hell would I cut my hair in a zombie apocalypse? 'You ever gonna take a bath?' [I'm] just going to get dirty again."

NORMAN REEDUS
DARYL DIXON

“Now we’re really going to see a world overtaken by walkers”

SURVIVOR TALK



"On one level, the image of the season six poster [with Rick and Morgan head to head] could be

literal or it could be symbolic of a theme that's going to run through season six about that dynamic, the dynamic that Morgan presents and the dynamic Rick presents, that will permeate everybody, that may show up more practically in conflicts between other people... It's a bit like Daryl — sexually ambiguous [laughs]."

LENNIE JAMES
MORGAN JONES

Rick potentially kill someone or potentially kill a few people, or threaten people, or take over that place by force. That was the jeopardy, and he found a way to do it without any of that violence. In fact, it wasn't until after that reconciliation, after he had sort of squared things and it seemed like everything was gonna be cool, that violence reared its head.

With an ever-expanding cast, and still more players about to be introduced, you can only marvel at how *The Walking Dead* weaves so many characters so effortlessly. Hurd tells us the secret lies in the show's source material, as created by writer-producer Robert Kirkman.

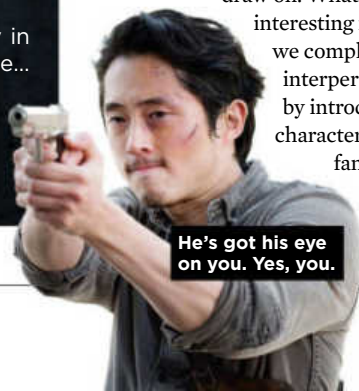
"I think the underlying comic book is such a fantastic blueprint for how to do that incredibly well, and luckily we have the comic books to

draw on. What keeps the show interesting is that each season

we complicate the interpersonal relationships by introducing new

characters. The comic book fans are going to see

iterations of them that certainly bear



He's got his eye on you. Yes, you.

a resemblance to the ones in the comic book without being entirely consistent with the plots that are from the comic books. We love the Easter eggs. We love introducing characters like Heath, but we also want to make sure that we keep it fresh and interesting."

DÉJÀ VU

In addition to actor Corey Hawkins' no-nonsense Heath, season six will introduce another comics character in Dr. Denise Cloyd (played by Merritt Wever), an Alexandrian medic, and another resident named Carter (played by Ethan Embry), who's merely mentioned in the book as one of those who helped build the town's wall.

"The characters that are introduced," explains Hurd, "will be very identifiable from panels in the comic book. So those fans who want those Easter eggs will absolutely have them. But once again we're not hewing to a particular storyline arc for those characters taken directly from the comic book. There will absolutely be nods and panels brought to life, but not exactly in the way [one would expect]. As Robert has said from the very beginning, the show is inspired by the comic books but he has an opportunity to explore things with those characters that he was unable to in the comic books. And because we have characters like Daryl Dixon that didn't exist in the comic books, by virtue of the fact that he is in that universe... it's going to change things."

While the details of the two narratives will continue to differ, Gimple observes that Kirkman's comic indeed reflects the mental state of the show's survivors in the months ahead. "Where we are in the show at this point is related in a lot of ways to where they were in the book at this point. They're consummate survivors now, this group, they can take whatever the world has thrown at them. What do they do with that power and how do they face the rest of their lives now knowing they can get through it? They're gonna face some pretty intense challenges, but those challenges are gonna form them even more deeply into the characters that they will become."

Despite the intense affection fans have for the show's core survivors, Hurd insists that *The Walking Dead's* writers are unafraid of the inevitable fallout that would occur if they did the unthinkable and killed off its most cherished characters.

SAFETY NOT GUARANTEED

"The thing is that there are arcs for each character, and we have to be true to that first and foremost. If we're not, then we run the risk of not telling the story well. So no one's immune... I think we proved after this period of time that we don't do it just to goose the ratings or just for the shock value. There really is an arc that's been planned out, often a couple of seasons in advance, for the characters, and the journeys of the remaining characters are all influenced by who survives and who doesn't. It really is something where you have to stay true to those arcs. Because they affect so many of the other characters.

"As with any good drama, the characters →



And still as ruggedly handsome as ever.

SURVIVOR TALK



"We're going to see if Alexandria is a good place for Abraham to be. One of the things I was

saying last year as well is that Alexandria is giving Abraham quiet time. I don't necessarily know if Abraham thrives on quiet time, with time to reflect, time to think, time to be inactive. There's something that is incredibly satisfying and makes him not only feel useful but alive when he's doing what he is ultimately built to do - which is to fight and kill. What does that quiet time do to him? We'll see."

MICHAEL GUDNITZ
ABRAHAM FORD



That's some well-conditioned hair, considering.

“As with any good drama, the characters evolve, the world evolves”

evolve, the world evolves. Unlike a soap opera that's set in a hospital and is always going to be in a hospital and always dealing with relationships between doctors and nurses and patients, our settings continue to evolve. The threat continues to evolve. And because characters evolve the relationships among them change. That's why the level of commitment of the cast and the crew remains so strong. No one is phoning it in. That's what keeps it fresh and interesting, just working with the most incredibly talented people that I've had the pleasure of collaborating with over a 30-plus year career; and being able to tell 16-plus hours of drama in my favourite genre, horror, year after year. That's just a blessing."

Adding to the show's horror this season will be a far greater number of walkers than fans have ever seen before, courtesy of Hurd's fellow executive producer, make-up effects master Greg Nicotero.

"I think Greg has said 800 or more," says Hurd, a note of awe in her voice at Nicotero and his squad of artists' accomplishment. The season premiere alone, she tells us, "will have the most walkers of any episode to date."

"Every season I think, 'There's no way that Greg and his team can top what they've done last season.' But they do. It's been great to see that over these six years the collaboration between the

writers and the effects team is so great that often great ideas come from prosthetic effects that we're able to incorporate into the show."

As ever with *The Walking Dead*, the greatest threat to our band of survivors this season will come not from the dead but the living. This time around that threat is made manifest by the Wolves, a pack of scavengers who've forsaken all semblance of their humanity, ominously foreshadowing what Rick could become should he continue down a path without mercy.

Before she and Gimple return to their work, we ask Hurd if these bloodthirsty marauders could soon infiltrate Alexandria. The exec hesitates for a moment before responding.

"Each season we've had new threats from within and without. Going back to the graffiti we've seen previously... 'Wolves not far.' That's probably all I can say." 🗡️

The Walking Dead airs on FOX in the UK. The show airs on AMC in the US.

REMEMBERING TYREESE

Few characters on *The Walking Dead* were as beloved by fans, or Greg Nicotero, as Chad Coleman's Tyreese. "I've had to kill off a lot of characters on the show," says the director/executive producer. "When Chad and I went to dinner, he said, 'Tyreese has done what he needs to do.' Chad was at peace with what his journey was. I got chills watching him in that last scene, where he's in a room talking to the ghost of everybody. There's blood flying off his arm and he's battering the walls. It was so powerful. Chad put every ounce of who he was as an actor out there."



The Walking Dead is never afraid to kill its favourites.

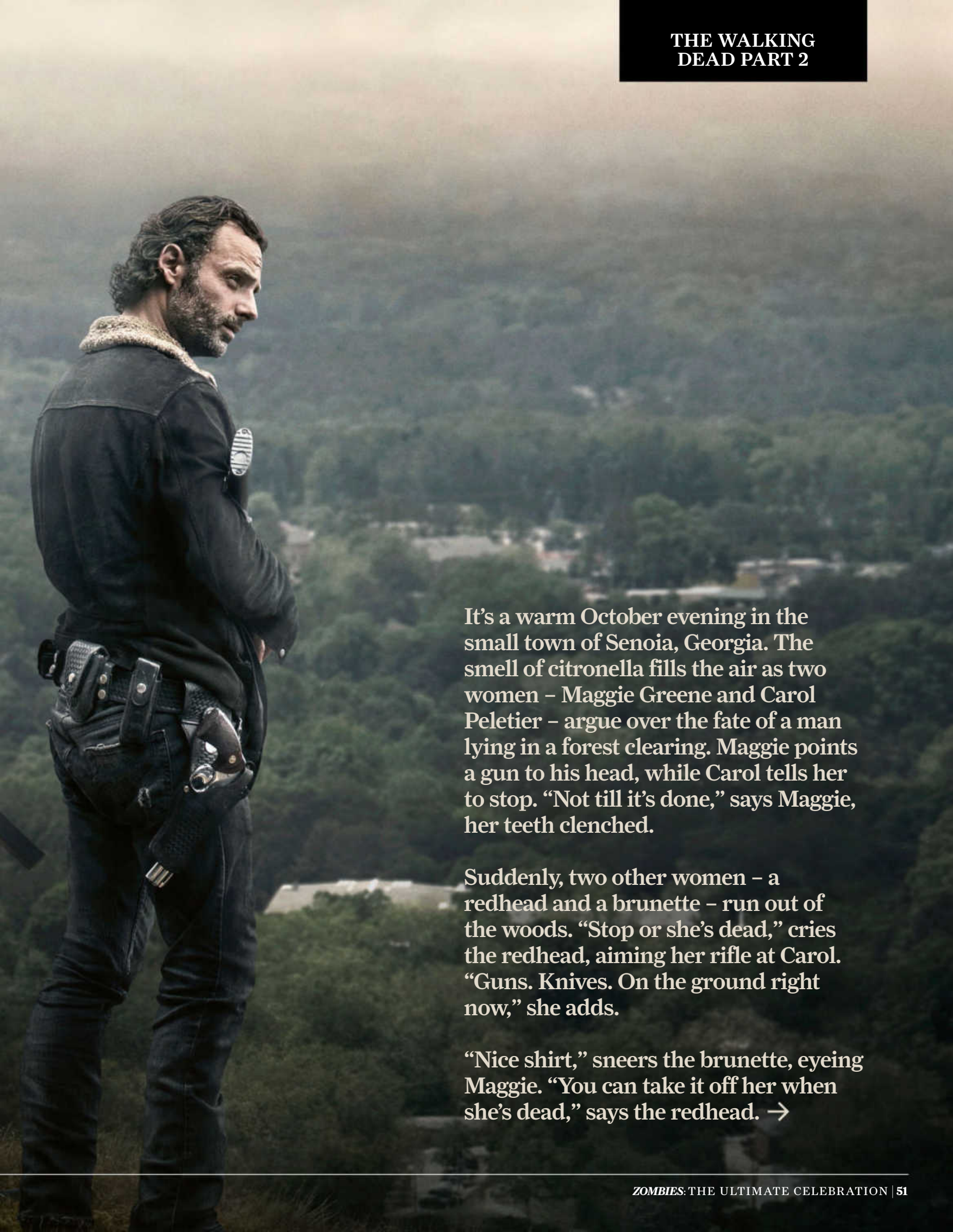


ON SET

THE SECOND HALF
OF SEASON 6 OF
THE WALKING DEAD
PROMISES OUT AND
OUT CHAOS. WE
VENTURE ON SET...

WORDS JOSEPH MCGABE

DEAD RECKONING

Rick Grimes, played by Andrew Lincoln, stands on a grassy hillside, looking out over a vast, forested valley. He is wearing a dark jacket with a fur collar and a patch on the sleeve, and a utility belt with a gun. The background shows a dense forest with some buildings visible in the distance.

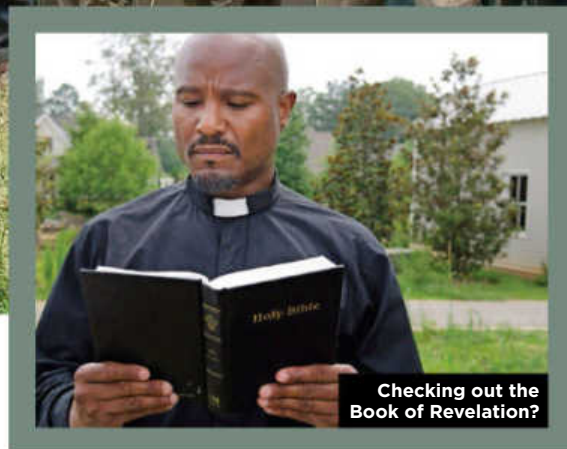
It's a warm October evening in the small town of Senoia, Georgia. The smell of citronella fills the air as two women – Maggie Greene and Carol Peletier – argue over the fate of a man lying in a forest clearing. Maggie points a gun to his head, while Carol tells her to stop. “Not till it’s done,” says Maggie, her teeth clenched.

Suddenly, two other women – a redhead and a brunette – run out of the woods. “Stop or she’s dead,” cries the redhead, aiming her rifle at Carol. “Guns. Knives. On the ground right now,” she adds.

“Nice shirt,” sneers the brunette, eyeing Maggie. “You can take it off her when she’s dead,” says the redhead. →



Nicotero credits the show with inspiring a new generation of make-up artists.



Checking out the Book of Revelation?

“C” ut,” cries director Billy Gierhart. Actors Lauren Cohan and Melissa McBride, along with the three guest stars, smile as coffee arrives on the set of the second half of season 6 of *The Walking Dead*.

While the human threat facing the show’s band of survivors in this, the thirteenth episode, remains as great as that of any of its undead walkers, what remains most astonishing is that the series exists at all. It shouldn’t. There’s no market for a serious-minded, adult horror drama. At least that was the thinking when it debuted in 2010.

And its very first scene, in which leading man Andrew Lincoln shot a zombie girl in the head, clearly signalled its uncompromising approach.

Now, as the most-watched series in U.S. cable television history, and – next to *Game Of Thrones* – the most popular original scripted drama in the world, any doubts about *The Walking Dead*’s viability have long since been hushed. Executive producer Greg Nicotero credits the show’s characters with broadening the planet’s taste for terror.

“There’s a billion zombie movies out there. I could list on one hand the number of movies that have that impact,” says the bearded multi-hyphenate; who’s helmed four of this season’s episodes, the most of any director. Raised on classics like *Jaws* and *The Exorcist*, an assistant on staples like *Day Of The Dead* and *Evil Dead II*, and a supervisor on everything from *Scream* to *Hostel*, there’s no greater authority on, or fan of, the genre than Nicotero.

“It’s all about the world that you create,” says Nicotero. “*The Walking Dead* has created a world of characters that you not only want to root for, but that you want to be. A lot of that is attributed to the graphic novel and the characters that Robert [Kirkman] created, and of course the actors that we cast in the pilot.”

Fused to the fans’ love of its characters – evident in the amount of *Walking Dead* cosplay at any given comic book convention – is the shock of witnessing their often sudden, always gruesome deaths. The production office, adorned with photos of deceased characters (its wall of ‘Grateful Dead’) has taken such steps to ensure the secrecy of those deaths that we are required to sign a one-million-dollar embargo, intended to prevent us from spilling any secrets. Some might call it excessive, especially since we’re not even told which character will perish next. Nicotero, however, sees it as a service.

“The secrecy is important for one main reason. We want to preserve the viewing experience. [Showrunner] Scott Gimple and myself and Gale

[Anne Hurd], we’re fans. What’s most important to us is we want other fans to react and have the experience we want them to have. That’s the bummer about spoilers – they’re taking that away from the viewers.”

This season, even the set design helps maintain that privacy. A sixteen-foot-tall wall surrounds the community that doubles for the survivors’ town of Alexandria. (Its residents are required to sign nondisclosure agreements, and must consent to accommodating filming when they move into the town.) While it protects the show’s characters from walkers, the wall also serves as a safeguard for the production against the hordes of *Walking Dead* fans who gather outside, pilgrims hoping for a glimpse of their heroes.

If fan adoration can sometimes get out of hand – one female admirer recently bit star Norman Reedus (sullen, crossbow-wielding Daryl Dixon) at one of his convention appearances – the cast have learned to take it in their stride.

“I’m fine, I’m not mad about it or anything,” Reedus later tells us of the biting incident. “She kind of had a freakout moment. She wasn’t trying to hurt me. To be honest, it was kind of funny when it happened... and kind of weird at the same time. I hope it doesn’t happen again. But I’ve always had good interactions with the fans.”

Reedus’ goodwill is mirrored by most of the *Walking Dead* cast, including Andrew Lincoln.



Danaï Gurira as fan favourite Michonne.

AND NOW... NEGAN!

Meet *The Walking Dead*'s new big bad



© REX (1)

The Walking Dead's heroes have survived all manner of threat, from influenza to cannibalism. But how will they fare against the most infamous antagonist in Robert Kirkman's Eisner Award-winning comic book – the profanity-spouting sadist known as Negan? With Jeffrey Dean Morgan in the role, we're confident we won't be seeing a kinder, gentler madman.

"I've known Jeffrey for a long time, probably twenty years," says Norman Reedus. "When I heard he was cast, I was like, 'This is a good pick. Perfect.' Because he's charming, he's a really good actor, and he's got a little bad side to him. Having him is definitely a bonus... I don't know if it's a bonus for all the characters, but it's a bonus for the show."

Greg Nicotero adds that Morgan's charisma – evident in series like *Grey's Anatomy*, *The Good Wife*, and *Supernatural* – makes him the ideal enemy for Rick Grimes and company. "There's a likeable charm about Jeffrey, and a unique ability to bring a dark character to life. I've been a fan of his for a long time... At one point, on a Sunday night, we were waiting for *Game Of Thrones* to start. So I was watching *The Good Wife*, and I saw Jeffrey. I went, 'Damn. His smile is tremendously inviting...' You could imagine a guy like that in this dark role. Unbeknownst to me, a couple of months later, he would be the guy we cast in the show."



“It’s an exciting time to be able to push those boundaries...”

Today is the actor's day off, but he's arrived on set to lend his voice to a scene in which Carol and Maggie are separated from Rick, and must speak with him on a walkie-talkie. Nicotero plays us a snippet of a voice message Lincoln has left for him the night before. While travelling home from work, the actor sings enthusiastically – and unashamedly off-key – to his friend and producer, ebullient over the day's work. "He does this all time," laughs Nicotero. "He's nuts."

There's no greater testament to the show's success than the number of dark TV thrillers for which it's paved the way. The sex, violence, and horrifying deaths of *Game Of Thrones* followed in its wake, as did gruesome fan-favourites like the serial killer sagas *Hannibal* and *Bates Motel*, and the outrageous *American Horror Story*.

"I'm a big, big fan of *Game Of Thrones*," says Nicotero. "HBO gets away with quite a bit more because they're pay cable. But the stuff that we do in *The Walking Dead*... When I worked on *Day Of The Dead* back in 1984, that movie was unrated because of the gore and the make-up effects. Now we're doing on television what we couldn't even do in the theatres 30 years ago. It's an exciting time to be able to push those boundaries and allow special effects to be a big part of our storytelling."

Viewers should expect more of those effects than ever in the second half of the sixth season, explains the producer, who continues his

hands-on role in supervising them. The season's premiere boasted a record number of zombies and put twice as many extras through make-up (just under 300, representing 20,000 walkers) than any single previous episode. According to Nicotero, the midseason premiere, episode 6.09, "shattered that record".

"Balls out" is how Norman Reedus describes the remainder of season 6, which considerably amps up the action after Alexandria was last seen overtaken by walkers. "It's a completely different half of a season. It's complete chaos. There's no part of it that isn't completely messed up and going a hundred miles per hour. There's no fun any more on the show, it's all crazy. Everyone's just running for their lives, and there's a lot of death and a lot of blood and a lot of zombies."

Amidst all of that destruction, Nicotero has found the next generation of creators. "*The Walking Dead* has reinvigorated the interest in practical make-up effects," he says. "I recently joined Instagram, and I would say that a good portion of my 300,000 followers are young people who want to do special effects because they watch the show. That's the greatest compliment in the world. I was that kid. *Dawn Of The Dead* and *Jaws* and *The Exorcist* made me want to do what I do. I feel like it's my opportunity to pay it forward."

The Walking Dead Season 6 part B will air on Monday 15th February on FOX.



GREG NICOTERO

The Walking Dead's zombie master tells
Stephen Kelly how horror shaped his life...

Greg Nicotero is the unsung hero of your nightmares. Starting out as a special make-up effects artist on *Day Of The Dead*, he's built a 30-year career out of making movies live and breathe through prosthetics – especially horror. From the titular alien of *Predator* to the vampires of *From Dusk Till Dawn*, he's worked with some of the most terrifying monsters that the screen has ever unleashed. But his speciality is zombies, a skill-set he's currently putting to use as the co-executive producer, special make-up effects supervisor and occasional director of *The Walking Dead*. As the worldwide TV phenomenon continues its sixth series, he sits down with us to share just what informed this great, grisly CV...

FAMOUS MONSTERS MAGAZINE

If you ask anyone around my age, *Famous Monsters* magazine created a generation of monster fans. It was filled with photos of different monsters and it had these amazing covers. Even the articles weren't really articles. It was mostly all puns like Horror-wood. And you could go to the back of the magazine and order the little Super 8 movies. That's when I became aware of Frankenstein and Dracula and Ray Harryhausen. Between *Sinbad* and *Jason And The Argonauts*, all these things hit me at the same time.



PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

If [make-up effects creator] Tom Savini hadn't lived 40 minutes away from me, I wouldn't be sitting here now. Because Tom and George Romero opened those doors for me, and allowed me to experience Hollywood in Pennsylvania, where I grew up. There was also a guy who lived in Pittsburgh called Bill Cardille. On

Saturday nights, he would play the host of an old horror show called *Chiller Theatre*, and run monster movies. And at a very, very young age, that's what I did on Saturday nights.

CHILLER THEATRE

Along with *Famous Monsters*, I remember watching *Chiller Theatre*, sitting there with a sketch pad. I was about eight years old, and I would sit, sketch and draw the monsters while I waited for the movies to come on.

JAWS

I think *Jaws* was probably “the one” that really piqued my interest in needing to know just how they made it. It was the first time that I realised there was a bunch of people who had to build a fake shark. It fired my brain into this ravenous desire to learn everything about how they made that movie. Back then, you didn’t have the internet, so I would scour magazines. I started putting myself into the mindset of the technicians who have to build this shark, drive to Martha’s Vineyard, put it in the ocean... And the first time they did it – it sank! So it became this fascination with the tremendous odds that these guys had to undertake to get to what we saw on camera.

TOM SAVINI

Tom Savini was the guy. *Dawn Of The Dead*, *Friday The 13th* – they were two movies that ushered in the “splatter era” of special effects. I became a fan of Tom based on the work on those movies. I remember getting fake ID for the first time I watched *Dawn Of The Dead*, and seeing the head explode, and seeing the zombie bite the woman in the neck. I almost vomited I was so horrified. But I couldn’t take my eyes off the screen. Then you flash forward to 1984 and I find out I’m working with him on *Day Of The Dead*. And he was the guy.

GEORGE ROMERO

George gave me a lot of very interesting pieces of advice. We were shooting *Land Of The Dead*, and there’s a scene where a zombie is supposed to bite a girl in the face. We had it all set up but on action the girl started flailing her arms around – and right at the moment where the zombie bites the cheek off, her arm came up and covered it. I remembered being really disappointed. I wanted it to be perfect. And George saw the look on my face, and said, “Here’s something you should think about: it was real. That woman was struggling for her life and was punching for that creature. So the fact that the effect was blocked for a second or two doesn’t matter if in the reality of the situation that’s exactly what she would be doing – fighting for her life, struggling.”

PRACTICAL EFFECTS

I consider myself very fortunate that I was around right at the time of *Jaws* and the mechanical effects of ’75; then *Dawn Of The Dead* in ’77; then in 1980, *An American Werewolf In London* – this explosion of special effects. I felt like I was right there watching these milestone



Nicotero went from admiring Tom Savini films to working on them.

“I love that 13-year-old kids come up to me and say, ‘I wanna do what you do!’”

The Walking Dead contains many zombie tributes to classic films.



moments. I felt like I was part of it. I ended up becoming part of it! I feel like nowadays that experience doesn’t exist. Because everyone knows, “Oh, it’s a computer.” The whole idea of transforming Linda Blair in *The Exorcist* – those questions don’t pop up into people’s minds anymore, because the curtains have been pulled back. It was a critical time too for guys like Quentin Tarantino, Robert Rodriguez and Guillermo del Toro, who was a make-up effects guy as well. I think we all grew up in the same alien pod when we were young. I think the fact that *The Walking Dead* celebrates all practical zombie make-ups also has invigorated a new generation of people who embrace that. I love

that I have 13-year-old kids who come up to me and say, “I wanna do what you do!”

SCREEN ZOMBIES

I put tribute zombies into *The Walking Dead* a lot, which are my little payback to the genre. It’s something I’ve done quite a bit. There are zombies that have been in *Dawn Of The Dead*. Even Peter Cushing’s zombie from *Tales From The Crypt* got in there! So I do get a chance to do a lot of stuff like that.

STEPHEN KING

He is the one author in my life where I’ve read everything of his when it came out. I got to meet him and work with him when we were shooting *Creepshow 2*. He was writing a book then, and he would crumple up pages he was writing, and throw them away. I went into his trailer, took a piece out of the trash and kept it. And then I realised it was *Misery*! Years later I would work on the movie version of that book, and I showed him the piece of paper I took. It was kind of fun to be that kid and go, “Ooh, he’s writing something!”



Maybe it’s time to start shopping at a different mall.

The Walking Dead is on Fox on Monday nights in the UK. It airs on AMC in the US.

FEAR ITSELF

The prequel series to
THE WALKING DEAD
*explores the horrifying outbreak –
Joseph McCabe braves the hordes*



The new show centres around an engaged couple and their children.

FOR HALF A DECADE, *The Walking Dead* has terrified TV viewers with creator Robert Kirkman's nightmarish vision of a zombie apocalypse, showcasing the savagery of both mankind and its horrific undead offspring. But beyond horror there lies something worse... Fear.

The brainchild of Kirkman and showrunner Dave Erickson, *Fear The Walking Dead* explores the early days of the zombie virus outbreak, which led to the decimated landscape explored by its parent show. Centred this time in a city, Los Angeles, *Fear* follows one engaged couple, Madison (Kim Dickens) and Travis (Cliff Curtis), each with a teenage kid, as they fight for a new life even as the world around them crumbles to pieces.

Erickson speaks with us from his L.A. office about how the first *Walking Dead* spin-off series came to be...

"I wrote the pilot based on an idea, a

"IT'S VERY MUCH ABOUT WHAT YOU DON'T SEE"

treatment that Robert wrote years ago, which was how we first met," says the executive producer, who's just returned from the show's set in Vancouver. "I found him to be an incredibly great collaborator. When he first called me about *Fear*, we sat down and broke the pilot and talked about season one."

Erickson describes *Fear The Walking Dead* as more steeped in psychological horror than the series from which it sprang.

"When Robert and I first sat down and started talking about this, it was in the context

of, in terms of chronology and timeline, this period when Rick Grimes was in his coma. So loosely speaking our story starts around the same time Rick was shot and what we're really doing is exploring the few weeks from the beginning of the outbreak until it really starts to reach critical mass. It's very much a slow burn. It's very much about what you don't see in the first few episodes. Something is wrong. There's paranoia. There's anxiety. There's tension. One of our family members sees something in the beginning of the show, but doesn't know if he's losing his mind. He doesn't know if it's something he ingested. He's trying to wrap his brain around what he saw, and what he saw is not of this world. There's tension for our characters as they get up to speed and realise this virus, this whatever, is actually turning people. There's also anticipation for the audience of course. I think everyone coming to this show knows the genre and definitely knows *The Walking* →

SPOTLIGHT

Dead, and it's partly playing with the anxiety and the worry of 'When are these characters going to catch up? When are they gonna start to realise what this really is? And will they realise too late?'"

FAMILY DRAMA

The showrunner insists that while *Fear The Walking Dead* will offer the social allegory that walks hand in hand with tales of paranoia, the show is first and foremost a family drama.

"We really tend to spend the bulk of our first episode and then into our second episode dealing with the problems that go with trying to build a new family. Travis has just moved in recently. He's divorced, he's got a very resentful, angry teenage son. Then Madison has a son and a daughter, a son who has some significant problems and a daughter who is quite driven and independent and has plans for the future. And it's very much about these two people – Travis and Madison – who do love each other. In our minds, it was and should be a very strong relationship. What's interesting is, as things begin to accelerate and as they begin to realise the world is changing, the attributes that they see in each other, that they love in each other, start to change. It becomes a real challenge to their relationship. The attributes of goodness and nobility and all the things we really appreciate in people in normal times, they can start to compromise you when you live in the zombie apocalypse."

BE PREPARED

Those circumstances prove even more challenging for the protagonists of *Fear The Walking Dead* than those of *The Walking Dead*, since, unlike Rick Grimes, neither Travis nor Madison is a policeman trained to handle crises.

"Travis is an English Lit teacher in high school, Madison is a guidance counsellor at the same school," explains Erickson. "That's how they met. We really don't have any characters in the beginning of our show who are at all prepared for this. They don't have the life skills. They don't have the things that Rick and Shane had in their toolkit when the world ended. That's actually something that will become very interesting, because we won't really get to this point probably until season two, when it really comes down to survival, when it comes down to having to find food, having to find water, having to find shelter; the things that you need to survive. Then having to defend those things. They've never been trained for that. We'll be dealing much, much more with this fish-out-of-water sensibility. That's not to say that Rick and Shane weren't also dealing with a completely new world, but they did have some tools that our characters don't. Which I think will be fun for the audience to watch."



"No, I don't think anyone here bought PPI."



How bad do things get before you realise something is really wrong?



Fear is further distinguished from *The Walking Dead* by virtue of the fact that it is not, at least in its early episodes, a story that takes place on the road.

"We're not really road-tripping it," confirms Erickson. "That's something we'll eventually get to, but we really wanted to stay in our city and be able to explore it as much as we could. We didn't want to abandon Los Angeles too quickly. A big part of the show is about the disintegration of society as seen through the disintegration of this family. But we do want to show the gradual fall of a major city. There were thematic and creative reasons for choosing Los Angeles, but we also wanted something that was distinctive, and distinctly not rural Georgia."

FRESH MEAT

Since *Fear The Walking Dead* takes place in the early days of the outbreak, Erickson says we can expect to see a different breed of walker than those that have come to infest *The Walking Dead*.

"I think Amy [in season one] was probably the best example from the original show



Watch out for those flying zombies!

"WE WANT TO SHOW THE FALL OF A CITY"

of a partially turned walker... Some of our characters will meet violent ends. So they may bear wounds, they may be bloodied up. But for the most part, our walkers will have their distinctive look but they definitely do not have the monstrous features that the atrophied, rotting walkers have on the original show.

"What was important to Robert when we first sat down was that as difficult as they are physically to kill, emotionally and psychologically there's a trauma to it as well. What I find interesting is that when confronted by a family member, a friend, a colleague, somebody you had coffee with the day before and they're attacking you, your instinct is not gonna be, 'Okay, this person's dead.' It's gonna be, 'This person is sick. This person's on something.' You want to defend yourself, but you also want to help. You want to take care of these people. Slowly what we did is just introduce the realisation that these people are gone. So when you have to actually do violence to protect yourself, it's a lot of weight. Especially if it's somebody you knew. What would really happen if you had to put down somebody who you cared about? Not fully knowing what this is, not knowing if there is some miracle cure that's gonna come along in the next few days. Not knowing if in a week somebody's gonna say, 'You know that guy you killed? We're gonna take you away.'"

"This is a whole new world," adds Erickson. "The opportunity to explore the fall and to see the pieces, to see the city coming down and our family fractured, it allows us to explore some parts of the world, part of this mythology Robert created, in a different way." 🧟

Fear The Walking Dead airs on AMC in both the US and the UK.

FEAR THE WALKING DEAD

RETURN OR THE ZOMBIE KING

Walking Dead executive producer and make-up FX maestro Greg Nicotero introduces a different kind of walker...



How do the newborn walkers of *Fear The Walking Dead* differ from those of *The Walking Dead*? The cool thing about *Fear* is that it's one of those situations where

you're walking down the street and you see somebody who's walking a little slower, but you don't know, you would never think in normal life that there's something wrong with that person.

So it's like the beginning of *Shaun Of The Dead*?

That's actually a really good analogy. On *The Walking Dead* we push the envelope every season, because we're a year and a half after the zombie apocalypse. So we're constantly striving to push that. What's creepier about *Fear The Walking Dead* is the aspect that people don't recognise [walkers] immediately. They think someone might just be sick or not feel well or just look a little weird. But you would never stop on the street and go, "Oh my god, that's a monster!" You would probably go to the opposite side of the street and avoid them.

The walkers in *Fear The Walking Dead* are less decomposed than those in *The Walking Dead*. But have you created some we might still see as action figures?

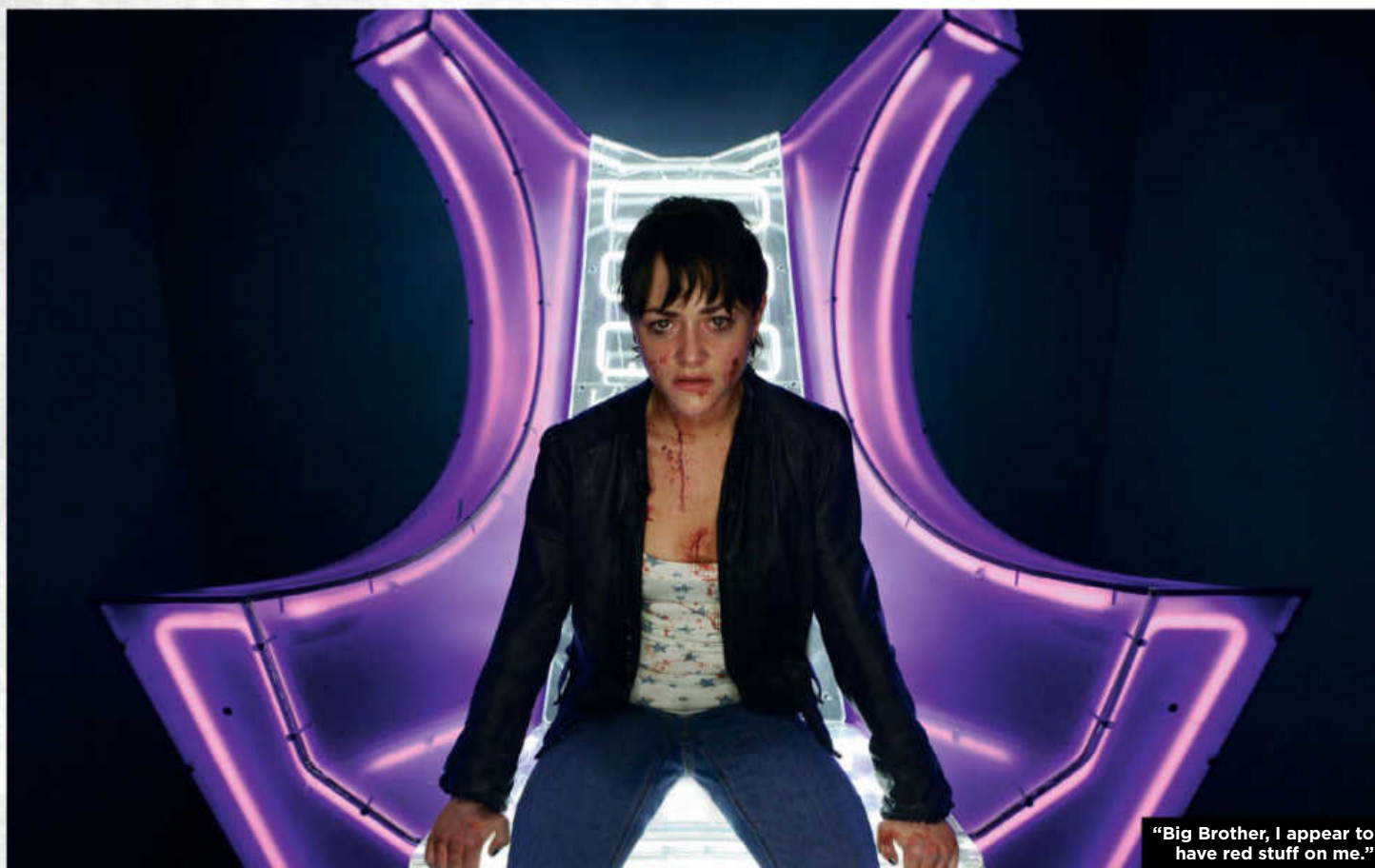
Oh for sure. We still have an obligation to have those moments where we have the audience stop and go, "Oh my god! Did I just see that?" That's sort of the fun of the show - pushing those moments where people see something and they have to kind of comprehend it. I think on *Fear* we're able to play those moments off the characters. The characters see something horrible happening and you play that confusion and fear off of how they react.

BOX OF DELIGHTS!

Zombie shows have taken over our airwaves – here's our guide to the best small-screen shamblers.

DEAD SET

Big Brother contestants experience big bother in Charlie Brooker's satirical drama



"Big Brother, I appear to have red stuff on me."

Ever wanted to see *Big Brother* housemates horribly eviscerated?

If so, check out to *Dead Set*, a five-part horror serial which aired over the course of a week in 2008 on E4. Written by acerbic TV critic Charlie Brooker, it sees a bunch of contestants in the reality show caught up in the midst of a zombie apocalypse. *The Guardian* writer tells us that the project began life back in 2005, when he was watching 24. "I thought, 'Why doesn't someone do this with zombies? That would be brilliant.' I thought somebody would, and nobody did, so then I had to do it! Then I was watching *Big Brother* one night and I thought, 'That's a good place to hole up!' I wrote the first episode, then it took a long time to persuade people to do it."

Was it a hard sell? "Yes and no," Brooker says. "Originally we went through the drama department at Channel 4; then it was a lot straighter. I wrote the first episode deliberately devoid of any laughs, almost as a statement of intent. The drama department ummed and ahed a lot and then commissioned me to write a second episode, and then they passed on it. Then the entertainment department got wind of it, so it ended up going through entertainment. Because we've got the gimmick of the *Big Brother* element, it made it a logical thing for E4 to look at – they [used to] pump out *Big Brother* half the year."

Jaime Winstone plays the main character, a junior member of the *Big Brother* production team. "Kelly is modelled on runners I've met, who are quite feisty, no-nonsense, put-upon and hard workers. A lot of TV productions function a bit like a cult, so she's a bit like somebody who's being inducted into a cult, to start with. She's got a long-suffering boyfriend on the outside who she hasn't seen much of. One thing people might think of the first episode is, 'Is this going a bit *Hollyoaks*?' because she's having a fling – but then pretty quickly, we kick that into a bin! It all kicks off on an eviction night, the zombie apocalypse, and she survives. She goes into the house and they all think she's another housemate, cos they've been oblivious to the first night that this has happened outside. They're still arguing about who's eaten the last of the eggs, while everyone else is lying outside with their ribcage torn apart! So they think that what she's babbling about is a trick, all part of the show."

Brooker went on to create more horror satire with *Black Mirror* but before *Dead Set* his previous television writing credits had been for comedy shows like *Nathan Barley* and *Brass Eye*, making this his first stab at drama. "In a lot of ways it's a very straight, populist show," Brooker considers, "The model was things like 24, so it's not chinstrokey. It's pretty dumb in a lot of ways. It should come across as a fun romp, but it's very gruesome as well. I can't imagine there's ever been a show quite as

Day three in the *Big Brother* house...



“I can't imagine there's ever been a show quite as gruesome”

gruesome – except maybe for documentaries about eye surgery! We've tried to outdo Lucio Fulci in a couple of places, and there's a nod to the scene in *Day Of The Dead* where Rhodes gets pulled in half – we've got someone pulled to pieces in a very, very graphic way. I quite like the thought that there'll be some people who go, 'Ooh, this sounds funny!' and will tune in and

be puking their spaghetti bolognese into their laps."

George Romero's zombie films are well-known for their vein of social commentary, and *Dead Set* also has a "message". "In the original *Dawn Of The Dead* it's there, all that satirical comment, if

you want it, or you could just watch it and go, 'Ooh, look out, here come the zombies!' That's what we're going for. Obviously, with the set-up we've got, there is a satirical undercurrent to the whole thing but we're trying not to shove it centre frame and go 'Look at that! Think about it, yeah?' It's background rather than foreground. We're not trying to confuse [*Newsnight Review*]'s Mark Lawson to death!"

And *Big Brother* fans can enjoy a host of cameos by former housemates. "There's Aisleyne, Kinga, Imogen, Eugene, Bubble, Helen, Makosi... There's a logical reason for them to be there, and I think they're used sparingly and well. Some you see in the first episode – they're all in a green room waiting to go on a reunion show. Some of them were zombies – throughout the series you get the odd one who crops up, who you probably won't even notice unless you're pausing the DVD."

Critically acclaimed at release, nominated for a BAFTA, Brooker was initially unsure what

people would make of the series.

"It's a very odd tone. I really hope that people who like zombie films will love it," he says. "Hopefully it's scary and brutal, and it also should be funny. I wonder if people who despise all reality television will think it goes far enough, and whether people who love it are just going to be upset! And there will definitely be a large percentage of people who just go, 'This is the stupidest programme I've ever seen in my life!', cos it's outright escapism."



Looks like he's been caught red handed. Arf.



"What the hell's she doing with that bottle?"

Dead Set is available on DVD and Blu-ray.



iZOMBIE

Meet the star of US undead crime show *iZombie*, Rose McIver.

GENRE SLICE & DICE “My manager sent me *iZombie* and from the title I assumed it would be along the lines of *The Walking Dead*. I was surprised when I got home and read it and it was this bizarre zombie/comedy/procedural. They subvert the zombie genre quite a lot.”

HERO OR VILLAIN? “I’ve always been drawn to comedies with a strong sense of tragedy at their centre. I only recently watched *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and I feel like Liv is a cross between Buffy and Angel, just as a zombie. I think what is appealing with Liv is she is cynical and jaded. Although she maintains some sarcasm and her dark sense of humour, she’s got a purpose.”

GOTH GUISE “We’re playing that she’s able to pass off as a human as her family and friends still believe she is human. But she’s unhealthy. I lose all my pigment and I have white hair and very white skin. I have dark circles under my eyes. The more hungry I am and the longer it’s been since I’ve had a brain I get veins and put on the contact lenses.”

DEATH BECOMES HER “[Liv] comes out of medical training and that’s no longer her world. Now, how do you find [your place]? Which I think is a very human and relatable story. It just so happens that hers is magnified because she lost her life. It’s about the struggle with family, and deciding where to live and to still engage with schoolfriends. Liv realises in the first episode that she is able to help bring justice to people who died so she finds identity in it all.”

FINDING YOUR INNER UNDEAD “It was incredibly challenging in thinking about it in the weeks leading into shooting. Luckily the first time that I had to play a zombie was in the middle of the night, shooting in the cold in the woods and I was clinging to the roof of a car. My brain was mush and it was a relief because stuff just happened. I had no inhibitions and played around and found the thing that worked.”

iZombie airs on The CW in America and is available on Netflix US – UK release date is TBC.



THE RETURNED

The undead have never been more gorgeous in this beautiful, creepy French drama...

Shot on location in eastern France, *The Returned* follows the residents of a small Alpine town struggling to come to terms with a bus accident that killed many of the local children. Then one night, four years later, the dead come home, with no memory of the accident, wondering why everyone looks so startled...

It if sounds familiar that could be because it's based on a 2004 movie of the same name (known in some territories as *They Came Back*). "We decided to start producing TV about six or seven years ago," says the show's producer, Caroline Benjo, when we spoke to her back in 2013 before the first series aired. "We really thought that things were happening [on TV] that weren't in cinema. We decided to look into our own catalogue [production company Haut Et Court were responsible for films such as *Coco Before Chanel*] and see if we had any films that could be a starting point, and *Les Revenants* was one of them." If you've seen the film, don't expect the show to follow it religiously, though. The show's writer/director Fabrice Gobert is keen to stress the differences. "It was necessary for us to have fewer dead characters. It allows us to get closer to the emotional consequences of their return. And a radical change is that they don't know that they have died. The living have to tell them..."

But why choose to make a zombie-drama, with competing shows such as *The Walking Dead* on air? "It was a genre that we really wanted to explore, and a genre that was well defined by American TV," says Benjo. "We thought it would

be interesting to deal with these issues, but through a naturalistic approach. We wanted to try to write a zombie story with more of a European feeling."

It was a brave decision. French TV is not well known for its fantasy, after all. "It was extremely risky from the broadcaster's point of view and from our point of view," agrees Benjo. "It may be a cultural problem," adds Gobert. "There aren't a lot of fantastic films either. But the truth is I was very comfortable. It would have been much more difficult for me to imagine a new police drama!" This inexperience with the genre doesn't show. *The Returned* is a classy piece, and a clear descendant of such telly landmarks as *Twin Peaks* and *Lost*, but with an almost surgical focus on the lives of its characters.

"In the television series I really like – *Six Feet Under* and *The Sopranos* – the characters are more important than the story," says Gobert. "TV series give you time to develop characters and to show their evolution." Of course it helps that the show has an exceptional cast, both in terms of the adults and – crucially – the children. There

are no annoying moppets here. "I had the great opportunity to choose actors that I wanted to work with, and the casting director also had brilliant ideas," says Gobert. Nowhere is this more clear than in the pivotal scene where bereaved mother Claire (Anne Consigny, *The Diving Bell And The Butterfly*) is reunited with her deceased daughter Camille for the first time. It's a scene that was tough to shoot. "When Fabrice came up with the scene, we thought, 'Oh my god, this is it!' But then afterwards, we had no idea if it was going to work," "We were worried. But we knew right away watching it that he had captured something quite exceptional..." If all of this sounds a little worthy, don't worry. There are also mysteries to solve and a killer on the loose in the show. "There are many layers and many surprises, and many questions," says Benjo.

Seems he was right – the first season turned out to be a huge hit and was followed by a second two and a half years since the first originally aired in France. The production company, realising Gobert was the key to the success of the first season, was happy to let him take his time perfecting the second. "We just took the time Fabrice needed to make absolutely sure that not only was it going to be as good as the first season but that it was even more surprising." At the end of season one viewers were certainly left with questions and Benjo promises answers will come... but perhaps not in the way you expect. "There is a quality to the kind of answers [Fabrice Gobert] gives that is certainly not disappointing because they are mysterious in themselves," she says. "So there is something that brings you into the spirit of *The Returned* but it takes you much further. I must say we were all very surprised how much Fabrice could play with that. We are going to enter the series through a new character, Berg, played by Laurent Lucas, who seems to be there to help," says Benjo, "but very soon we are going to see that he has a story with the valley, with the village, with the past. He is going to meet all our characters and have a different kind of impact on their lives."

A show that makes zombies good-looking, glamorous and filled with ennui, *The Returned* is an intelligent rival to all the vampire series you can shake a stake at. 🍷

“We wanted to try to write a zombie story with more of a European feeling, and with a naturalistic approach”

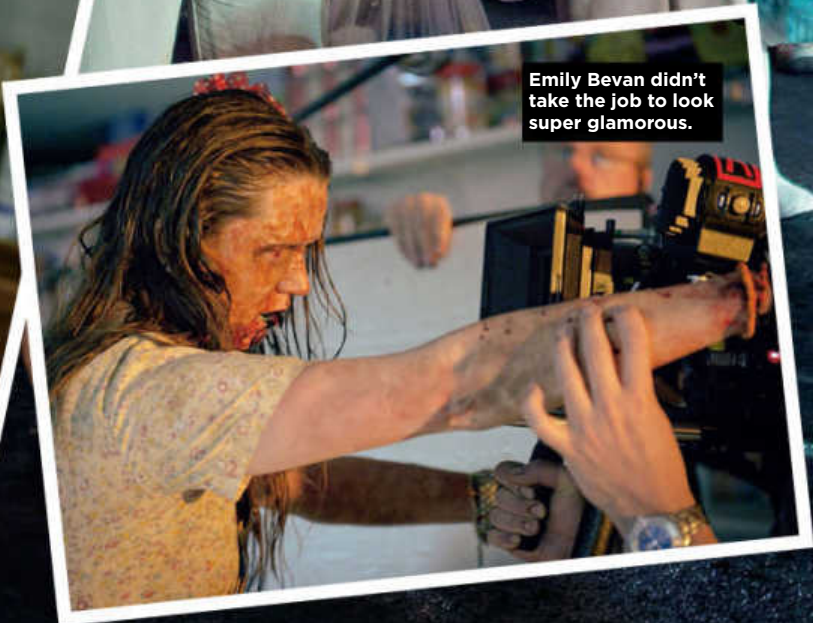
The Returned seasons 1 and 2 are out now on DVD and Blu-ray.



Luke Newberry
begins his journey
to the other side...



Emily Bevan didn't
take the job to look
super glamorous.



IN THE FLESH

The undead are taking medication and returning to their old lives in BBC Three show **In The Flesh**. We visit the set of the first and second seasons.

BY IAN BERRIMAN

December 2012 on a wet afternoon in Salford, the dead are coming back to life... in a pie factory!? Okay: truth be told, it's not a pie factory any more, but a former industrial space that's now a studio at MediaCity, home to *In The Flesh*, a three-part zombie drama created for BBC Three.

We're on set to watch a flashback to the night when the undead first rose from their coffins. Location work has already taken place; now a section of graveyard has been recreated in the studio, in a room lined with black cloth. A rectangle of turf is raised five feet off the ground on metal legs: it looks for all the world as if someone's decided to splice table tennis with a game of park football. Behind it, the church in the background is just a silhouette on wheels. A few final adjustments are made: the dry ice is cranked up, the turf gets a quick spritz of water, and someone yells "Can you move the church to the right about six feet?"

Holes in the platform allow two of the lead zombies, Kieren (Luke Newberry) and Amy (Emily Bevan) to sit beneath it, then emerge from the earth. Kieren gazes around with a look of incomprehension. In the background, Amy slowly drags herself out of her grave, resplendent in the '50s-style dress and fingerless gloves she was buried in. Between them, an undead old lady in slippers staggers across the stage. Amusingly, it

transpires that this extra's day job is in undertaking: "I'm doing two funerals tomorrow!"

In The Flesh is the brain-child of Dominic Mitchell, who penned the pilot while on Northern Voices, a BBC Writers' Room scheme mentored by *Torchwood* writer John Fay. It's a dream project for the first-time TV writer, who loves George Romero's classic *Dead* movies, and identifies Stephen King's *Pet Sematary* as the book that first got him hooked on reading.

"I'm a massive horror fan," Mitchell enthuses. "That's my go-to thing; if it's a costume drama or a horror I will go for horror every time – and twice on Sundays!"

However, steeped though he may be in the scary stuff, Mitchell was determined to make *In The Flesh* a very different take on the undead. "It's what would happen if there was a zombie apocalypse," he explains. "They treat it like an illness – it's called Partially Deceased Syndrome, and the zombies take medication. They're just like someone who's had a psychotic episode. I wanted to ground it, as much as possible. We wanted it to be a realistic *Kes/This Is England* kind of drama that just happened to be about zombies – for it to have that kitchen sink, Ken Loach feel to it, but with a little bit of genre thrown in."

George Romero's original trilogy of zombie movies are renowned for the way they metaphorically tackled issues like consumerism →



Amy (Emily Bevan): a girl in a mess.



A mere two members of the Human Volunteer Force.



Behind bars and a police line.

“She’s really ballsy, and she’s really grasping her second life with everything that she’s got”

and race. *In The Flesh* strives to do the same, as Luke Newberry tells us (once he’s brushed the peat off his shoulders...)

“It’s so multi-faceted, and so engaging,” Newberry says. “The fact that we’re zombies – or PDS sufferers – is one small element of the whole thing. Family is at the core of it: how families are by nature dysfunctional and have many problems to overcome. Instead of thousands of zombies running around with people shooting them, it’s, ‘What if this happened to a family?’ Then it also covers the whole thing of society and acceptance and people being closed-minded and stuck in their ways. I think it’ll speak to different people in different ways.”

AFTER THE EVENT

The series is set four years after an event known as *The Rising*. Since then, the threat of brain-munching zombies (referred to as “Rabids”) has been contained and controlled, thanks to a drug called Neurotriptyline, daily injections of which free PDS sufferers of their hunger for brains and return their intelligence, memories and ability to communicate. By popping in contacts and applying a flesh-coloured mousse to their faces,

they can make themselves look like the living – well, from a distance, anyhow. Now they’re being released from rehab centres and returning to civilian life – in Luke’s case, a tightly-knit village called Roarton. Understandably, not everyone is delighted...

“This small community is very religious,” Mitchell explains. “And there’s this firebrand vicar, Vicar Oddie [played by Kenneth Cranham]. He believes that they’re demons, they’re the White Horsemen from *The Book Of Revelation*, they’re evil, and they must be judged. He controls the parish council, and obviously has a lot of influence.”

Also not about to welcome home Kieren and his kind with open arms are Roarton’s Human Volunteer Force (led by Bill Macy, played by Steve Evets) who defended the community against the undead during the initial outbreak, and so have particular reason to be suspicious.

“There’s no guarantees with medication that it’s going to do its job for 20 or 30 years,” Mitchell notes, “and of course they’re immortal, so it’ll be going on forever. What if they come off the medication? What if they become tolerant to it? So the HVF are right to be fearful. There’s no simple good guys and bad guys; they’ve all got their own ideas.”

Further complicating matters, Kieren’s own sister, 18-year-old Jem (played by Harriet Cains) is a member of the HVF, and – initially at least – refuses to have anything to do with him.

“When her mum and dad try to get her to go pick him up from the PDS centre, she’s not having any of it,” Cains explains. “Her dad is in denial about the whole situation and acts as if nothing’s happened. Her mum is just trying to keep her family together, and it’s not really working out that well. Jem’s the only one who will turn around and say, ‘What a mess.’ Her journey through the three episodes is coming to terms with the fact that it’s not necessary to cull them all anymore. And it’s about forgiving her brother for leaving her.”

In the meantime, there is someone Kieren can turn to for support: kooky Lancastrian lass Amy Dyer, a fellow PDS sufferer who encourages him to learn to accept himself. If *In The Flesh* was a Hollywood movie she’d probably be played by someone like Zoëy Deschanel; here the role’s taken by Emily Bevan.

“It’s like people who’ve been in therapy or rehab



These days it's
all about going
for the brains...

People with torches:
always something
you can depend on.

together: regardless of their personalities they have this core understanding that they've got this vulnerability that they both share," Bevan explains. "She's really ballsy, and she's really grasping her second life with everything that she's got. Whenever she comes into a scene where there's lots of people, it's like the moment in a Western where everyone stops playing the piano and looks up at you as the doors swing! And she doesn't cower away from it. She's just like, 'What's your problem?'"

"She takes everything on the chin," Luke Newberry adds. "She's like, 'Everything's fine!', she doesn't really care, and Kieren's just the opposite of that! He's like, 'How can you be so happy?' And she shows him that you can, and gives him a bit of hope."

Indeed, in a community where many people are in deep denial about what has gone on, the

irony is that a character like Amy is arguably more 'alive' than many of the living. "That's what's weird about it," says Harriet Cains, "Because there's such real emotion coming from dead things. It's a bit Tim Burton-esque that, like the Corpse Bride – the dead have got more life in them! Whereas everyone who lived through *The Rising* – apart from the HVF – has learned to block it out and repress it."

If all this sounds rather angst-ridden and depressing, fear not. While *In The Flesh* is definitely not in the vein of *Shaun Of The Dead*, there are moments of humour arising naturally from the absurdity of certain situations. "Hopefully it's got a lot of comedy in it," Dominic Mitchell says. "But that's more to do with what comes out of characters rather than winking at the camera."

For example, an everyday family meal becomes slightly surreal when one of the people at the dinner table is undead...

"Kieren's parents can't deal with the fact that he doesn't eat food anymore. They really want

him to be their normal son," Mitchell says, "but of course zombies can't eat. So they kinda go, 'Could you fake it?' So you've got this ridiculous scene where they're all sat in the kitchen and he's pretending to eat!"

"Terrible things happen when they eat!" adds Emily Bevan. "As I say in one scene, 'I tried eating a Mars bar... had to throw away me knickers, and me skirt!' So that's a warning to all zombies!"

It was this mixture of humour and pathos that made the first season such a success, bagging it a Bafta and a second series. But could they recreate the magic a second time?

THE SECOND COMING

"Be prepared", Baden Powell's motto goes, but we're sure even he'd understand if the 161st Manchester Scouts were rather taken aback if they wandered into their hut right now. Last time we checked there was no badge for dealing with the undead. It's November 2013 and that hut is serving as Roarton village hall. The crew are keen to get the day's more dialogue-heavy scenes recorded early, as you can already hear the occasional distant pop of fireworks. Rows of chairs have been set up in front of the stage. Milling about on the wooden floor, with its faded sports court markings, are about 20 extras made ➔

Disciple Simon (Emmett Scanlan), Amy's new pal.



up as undead PSD sufferers. They're here to watch a video on a government programme which forces their kind to do voluntary community work.

Also present is star Luke Newberry. As the second series starts, it's nine months since the shocking end of the first series and Kieren is finally ready to move on – quite literally. He has a plane ticket to Paris in his pocket. Unfortunately, local MP Maxine Martin, a major new character, has other ideas...

Crouched by a cooker and a pile of toilet rolls in the scout hut's cramped kitchen, we watch the monitors as Maxine coolly explains to Kieren – with any note of triumph very well disguised – that his passport is invalid, as the form he got from Roarton post office was out of date. "They're in the dark ages here," she quips. The form now has an extra section for PDS sufferers,

and requires a certificate proving participation in the 'Give It Back' scheme. A disconsolate Kieren reluctantly trudges away.

This sad little tableau speaks volumes about where our hero finds himself now that PDS sufferers' rights are being restricted by a shift in government policy. Driving the backlash is the organisation Maxine represents: 'Pro Life' party Victus, whose rapid growth around a single-issue focus might put you in mind of Ukip... In the words of *In The Flesh* creator Dominic Mitchell, the situation is "a tinderbox", and Maxine is the



Look into the eyes, don't look around the eyes...

spark. That doesn't mean she's a ranting demagogue, though.

NOT A MONSTER

"That's what makes her quite scary", Mitchell explains. "She's got some good points. She's not coming in and going, 'They're all the devil!' She's giving very practical reasons why you shouldn't be welcoming PDS sufferers with open arms. 'If we can't separate them from the living, they've got to be properly monitored.' They're inherently dangerous. If you take away their medication, they will go rabid."

Another fascinating new character represents the flip side of the coin. At the end of series one,

“The second series is more about belief – belief in yourself, belief in other people”

Kieren's free-spirit best friend Amy left for a commune in the Lake District, run by the mysterious Undead Prophet – a shadowy figure mentioned but never actually seen. Now she's returned, with a new beau in tow: Simon, one of the Prophet's disciples. He's played by Emmett Scanlan, best known as *Hollyoaks*' villainous Brendan Brady. Troubled in life, Simon died of a heroin overdose. Since he rose again, he's found meaning to existence for the first time. "He was always looking for a purpose," Mitchell explains, "and I think now his new identity as an undead person gives him a belief in something greater than himself that he didn't feel in his first life."

Simon also spurns wearing the 'cover-up mousse' which allows PDS sufferers to blend in more easily – not that he'd call them that, preferring the phrase 'the Redeemed'. He's encouraged Amy to do the same. "We're out and we're proud!" laughs Scanlan.

Simon has a very different perspective on humanity, with good reason. "He was one of the first few Rabids that was captured and experimented on," Scanlan explains, "And there are scars that pepper his back, all over. The piece that I wear on my back is amazing. It's like stapled together skin – you see the spine. He carries those scars everywhere, and that affects how he sees things and how he interacts with people."

Between them, Maxine and Simon represent the two poles of the conflict at the heart of *In The*

Flesh's second series. At one end of the spectrum lies Victus; at the other, the Undead Liberation Army, whose response to restrictions on the rights of PDS sufferers often takes a terrifyingly violent form. "Those figureheads make things happen just by suggesting them," Mitchell explains. "They're not knocking on doors or causing attacks themselves. But people go, 'This is what Simon wants us to do.'"

Simon has had a profound effect on Amy too. She was looking for answers to the question, "Why are we here?" Now, thanks to her lover, she's embraced a new purpose. For Emily Bevan (Amy), that's a major theme of this second run.

"The first season was all about otherness, and what happens when you don't accept who you are and accept other people for who they are," she reflects. "I think this second series is more about belief – belief in yourself, belief in other people, belief in mythologies and what that makes you do in the name of belief, and how you judge other people."

Dominic Mitchell sums up the difference between last year and this slightly differently. "Season one was focusing on the past," he says, "about what happened in the Rising, what happened to Kieren during the Rising and what happened to him when he was a human being. Now what is the future for PDS sufferers? That's what we're going to tackle, that we didn't have time for in season one."

And with six hour-long episodes, instead of the three of series one, Mitchell has a significantly bigger canvas to play with.

"It's a bit more spread out, and because it's longer you get to see more different colours of Kieren," says Luke Newberry. "The new characters reveal different things, new sides of Kieren. We go to different places and there's whole new concepts. It's expanded the world, which is so exciting." 🧟

In The Flesh seasons 1 and 2 are out now on DVD and Blu-ray.

Well, you'd expect to find dead people in a graveyard...

VOTE VICTIOUS

Wunmi Mosaku plays Maxine Martin MP



How would you describe your character?

Maxine is quite a conservative MP. She's "pro-life", and for the village it's quite strange, because they're so accepting of the partially deceased, that someone not so accepting has been voted in. She was born in Roarton but left before secondary school, so it's like she's come back to the 1990s.

How does she present herself?

She has to be welcoming to all. Even the most right-wing politicians still try and be accessible, regardless of their policies. She's been taught how to be a good politician, how to be welcoming and all-encompassing. So she's trying her hardest to be accessible and modern.

Is it difficult to categorise her as good or bad?

I don't think you can, because politically it depends if you're on the right or the left. I think I might quite agree with her. I would say I was quite on the left, but with zombies I think I would be on the right! She's a baddie in many people's eyes because she's not pro PDS sufferers; she thinks that they are subhuman and that you can't treat them the same. So she's chosen a party that's pro-life because she doesn't necessarily agree with reintegrating them so completely into society.

What appealed to you about the series?

I think it's just really clever. It's made a genre that I would never be interested in interesting, and emotive as well. It's a privilege to be a part of something that's different. You say you're doing a zombie drama and people think you're doing badly! And it couldn't be further from the truth.

MAKING OF



AUSTEN

Lizzie Bennet battles the undead in Seth Grahame-Smith's classic novel. **James Mottram** chats corsets and corpses with

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
AND ZOMBIES



POWERS

Smith's gore-soaked reinvention of Jane Austen's the cast and crew of **Pride And Prejudice And Zombies...**



SAM RILEY

Mr Darcy gets arsey...



Are you a big zombie fan?

I liked *Shaun of the Dead* – that was a great zombie comedy. And I know the original Romero one. But I'm not really a horror fan or a zombie fan, particularly.

So what appealed about this?

It seemed risky. Like it could be a disaster or it could be a lot of fun! I think what Jane Austen didn't have the foresight to realise is that what the book really needed was zombies! If she'd been alive, this is the version she'd have liked the best.

How would you describe your take on Darcy?

Like a ninja – a ninja Darcy!

You get to dive into a lake, à la Colin Firth's Darcy. How was that?

I had one take to do it, but it was alright. At least I could keep the shirt on. There was one version I read where he comes out topless with his Spartan physique!

Yes, you could be forgiven for thinking it was a straight Austen flick.

It's a freezing December day in deepest, darkest Basingstoke. Ten minutes outside the Hampshire town, a large cast of extras in Regency attire are milling around a large farmhouse and barn. At first glance, you could be forgiven for thinking you've arrived on the set of yet another British costume drama. The sight of Lily James, wearing a purple dressing gown over her frilly costume to insulate her from the cold, only reinforces the idea.

Then comes the jaw-dropper as a new batch of extras shuffles past. Their flesh decaying, it can only mean one thing. Taken from the 2009 parody novel by Seth Grahame-Smith, a mash-up of Jane Austen's seminal 1813 novel of manners and morality with the undead, it's a period film like no other. Here, the zombies – dubbed the 'unmentionables' or the 'manky dreadfuls' – roam the English countryside after a pandemic struck 70 years earlier.

Given Grahame-Smith stated that Austen's novel, with its militia camps from the Napoleonic wars in the backdrop, was "ripe for gore and senseless violence", inserting a zombie plague is not as bizarre as it sounds. "It's funny how

different it makes you feel as an actor," says James. "You're trying to remember the tone of the film you're in. While you're doing this, it feels very Jane Austen-y. And then I'm very relieved when a zombie comes in!"

Starring as the fiercely independent Elizabeth Bennet, James admits it's been a "battle" to marry Grahame-Smith's high-concept with her traditional ideal of Austen's heroine, as she searches for love. "Trying to maintain Liz in this new version with zombies [gives you] less time to focus on her as a character – and that's hard," she says. "I hope people aren't like 'What?' She's much fiercer and she's a fighter and that takes precedence."

James was uncertain when she first read the script. "I thought that either I will get through three pages and think 'What a load of crap!' Or that 'Actually, this could be something.'" Fortunately, she stuck with it – despite the obvious risk involved. "Even being in it, so much of it will come down to Burr [Steers, the director] and how he puts all the pieces together." What about the horror elements? "There's an eeriness



The sexiest zombie slayers in history?

BELLA HEATHCOTE

Jane Bennet stamps on zombies...



Are you a zombie fan?

I really liked *World War Z*. And what was that incredible French show? *The Returned*! That was amazing. So, yeah, I suppose I do like zombies.

What was it like being on set with zombies?

There was one day when the zombie was absolutely terrifying. That was my first fight day. Oh god, there's a woman that comes at me and she has an undead child. There's just something very disturbing about that.

Did you undertake much fight training to play Jane?

Before I left LA, for about four months, I just became obsessed with it. I wasn't working at that time and I just thought I may as well throw myself into something. There was something very empowering about being in your body and out of your crazy actress head.

“While you’re doing this, it feels very Jane Austen-y. And then I’m relieved when a zombie comes in!”

but a realness [to it],” she nods. “And the zombies look good. They’re scary.”

The American-born Steers, whose past films include *17 Again*, knew exactly what he wanted. “Weirdly enough, I had a take when I went in, which was to re-insert Jane Austen and all the beats of the book,” he explains. “Other people went in very different directions with it, and my idea was to go back and think of it as you create this alternate world, where this zombie pandemic has happened, and then you’re staging *Pride And Prejudice* in it.”

As odd as it all sounds, placing zombies in 19th Century high society, Steers is insistent that the Austen characters treat this outbreak with the utmost seriousness, just as if it were typhoid or the black plague. “The thing was to play it not in a cheesy B-movie way but have you invested in the characters. It’s like when you take *Richard III*

and put it in Nazi Germany.” A cartoon, then, it is not – even if the film promises to be filled with gore, guns and ass-kicking heroines.

Steers’s take on zombies was to have them as more “cognisant” than your average flesh-eater. “The idea would be that they’ve evolved, that they’ve been around for 70 years, that they’re coming to the point when they can actually strategise. Some of them are retaining more human qualities – who they were as human beings. One of the big influences for me, on this, was *I Am Legend*, Richard Matheson’s [1954] book; that idea that they’ve become a competing race... they don’t see themselves as the monsters.”

How Austen’s universe meshes with the zombies becomes clearer when Steers and James return to the set for the next take. James is joined by her ‘sisters’ – Bella Heathcote (as Jane Bennet), Suki Waterhouse (Kitty), Millie Brady →



DOUGLAS BOOTH

Boisterous Mr. Bingley



How did you find the element of gender role reversal in the film?

Often in movies the guy comes and saves the day but in this you get such a great group of kick-ass girls, they're all amazing in it. To see such a beautiful group of girls dressed in period costume pulling knives and daggers out of their pantaloons and smashing the f**k out of a bunch of zombies was a dream!

How do the zombies fit in with Austen's themes?

The whole situation that they're in represents something from the original themes of the book and brings out stuff to a different audience and brings out stuff that you couldn't quite get away with in Austen's time. Now the women can take fate into their own hands.

Are you a fan of zombie films?

This has made me realise how great zombies can be, I'm probably going to go and search for more now!

Zombies – fancy your chances?

(Mary) and Ellie Bamber (Lydia) – for a scene set around the town ball. Marching towards the camera, this quintet is perfectly choreographed, as they spin, kick and punch their way through the hoards of attacking zombies, with some impressive martial arts skills.

With the Bennet sisters said to have picked up their fighting moves in China, the chance to play female combatants is something all the girls relished. "I was so excited about getting bruises," laughs Waterhouse, who also happens to be a brown belt in karate (she used to spar with her sister, growing up). "I did a fight with Lily and I got leg and arm bruises, and I literally didn't want them to disappear. I loved it! I almost wanted to darken them!"

The conflicts, of course, aren't just between the humans and the zombies. One of the smart aspects of the story is how Austen's verbal jousts are given a physical edge.

"The proposal scene with Liz Bennet is now a full on fight between the two of us – she attacks me with a letter opener!" laughs Sam Riley, who plays Mr. Darcy, the aloof gentleman protagonist of Austen's novel, who here has been refashioned as a canny zombie hunter.

While Austen purists may be up in arms about such good-natured sacrilege, it's not the first time she has been mashed into something else. English author P.D. James's 2011 novel *Death Comes To Pemberley* was a sequel-of-sorts, set six years after events of Austen's novel, turning the story into a murder-mystery. "The characters are great," notes Steers, "you almost want to take them and see what else they can do."

Admittedly, the last historical mash-up to hit screens, 2012's *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*, adapted by Grahame-Smith from his own novel, left a lot to be desired. But James makes a case that has plenty of relevance, citing the Ebola



LILY JAMES

Ballbuster Liz Bennet



Why do you think zombie films just keep rising from the dead?

They just hit a nerve. Whether they're walking slowly or fast, they're going to get you. It's so relevant at the moment with disease – things that spread underground. Even Ebola or terrorists or whatever it is, it's this sort of underground force that attacks you. I think it taps that nerve too. Also when you're dead, you should be dead!

Were you a fan of zombie films before?

I wasn't a huge fan of zombie films. I love *Shaun Of The Dead*, and I've seen bits of *28 Days Later*.

What kind of training did you do for the action scenes?

I did boxing and I was swinging around bats and doing a lot of hand-eye coordination because we wanted it to have that Eastern feel, so almost balletic.

crisis that gripped parts of the world. “Not that I’m saying Ebola is like zombies. But [there is] this idea of something that infiltrates, this zombie bite – it’s uncontrollable and it takes over.”

Perhaps even more contentiously, Steers notes how we’re living in an age where radicalised kids “from suburban England” are joining terror groups. “You can’t look at somebody and tell if they’re on your side and that was one of the things that I was interested in. There are these people [in the film] born of the same backgrounds as the others and they’ve become infected and they’re passing as non-zombies – that was one of the things I was instilling.”

Steers admits he wasn’t initially steeped in zombie lore, though George Romero’s *Night Of The Living Dead* was “interesting” to him. “That movie worked in so many ways – having a black lead, in a very racist era in America.” Much of his knowledge, he says, came from working on a

piece about Haiti “and how they used all the lore and that’s where I initially got into it”.

Likewise, James admits that the undead weren’t exactly her thing growing up. “As a kid, I wondered if I had a good imagination because I wasn’t scared of zombies or monsters,” she notes. “I was just scared of kidnappers. I always thought a man would steal me from our car or my bedroom! But I do love zombies.”

Certainly, she’s learning fast. Back on the set, as she prepares for another take, the actress offers some sound advice for surviving the zombie apocalypse. “Have four bad-ass sisters to go with you wherever you go! Have a dagger in your boot and knickers! Have daggers hidden in your hair. Basically hide as much weaponry on you in as sexy manner as possible!” She smiles. “Oh, and kill every zombie twice.” 🍷

Pride & Prejudice & Zombies opens on 12 Feb.

Zombie Preview!

The undead aren't going anywhere fast! Check out five new zombie movies shambling your way...

WORDS DAVE BRADLEY AND ROSIE FLETCHER



World War Z saw Brad up to his neck in it.

WORLD WAR Z 2

DIRECTOR TBA

STARRING BRAD PITT

ETA 9 JUNE 2017

→ The book by Max Brooks is wildly acclaimed, the first movie looked like it would flop but suddenly brought box office back from the dead to be a commercial success and so a sequel was greenlit with *Locke's* Steven Knight writing a draft of the script and *The Orphanage* director J. A. Bayona on hand to helm. Now at the start of this year it was announced Bayona was no longer attached but this undead behemoth has life in it yet. With star of the original Brad Pitt still on board Paramount is insistent the movie is still happening. Will it be a CGI heavy barrage or the



Bourne meets *Walking Dead* realism that was the original vision? Or something else entirely? Keep an eye out for more... 🔗

THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS

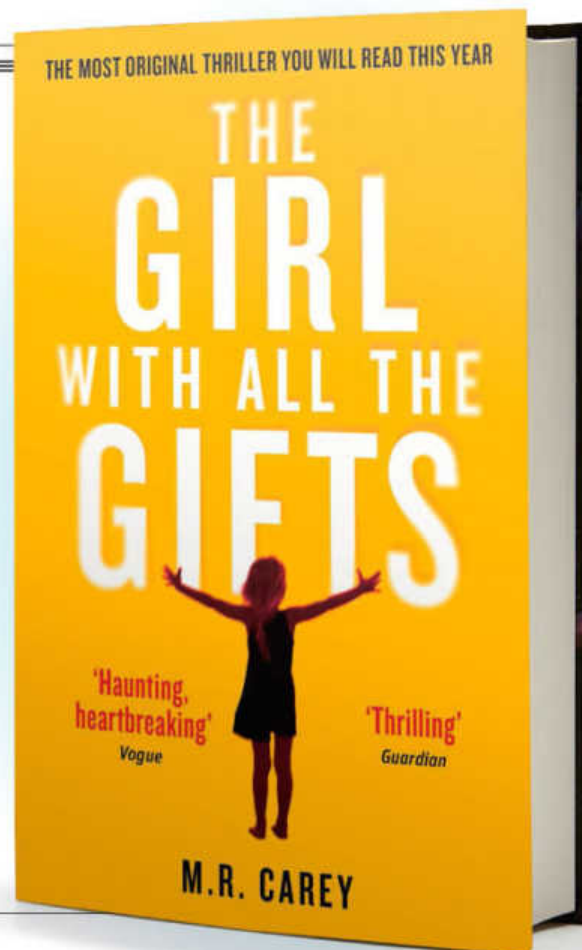
DIRECTOR COLM MCCARTHY

STARRING GEMMA ARTERTON, GLENN CLOSE, PADDY CONSIDINE, SENNIA NANUA

ETA 2016

→ “Melanie is an innocent who is also a monster but doesn’t know that and has to learn what it means.” In intelligent, compassionate, pre-teen Melanie, star of *The Girl With All The Gifts*, author M. R. Carey has created a new breed of zombie for a new world. Based on his bestselling novel and screenplay (he wrote them concurrently) *The Girl With All The Gifts* sees a post-apocalypse which begins in a military base

sheltered from the rampaging ‘hungries’ outside and experimenting on a new breed of young infected who might just be the hope for the future. Gemma Arterton plays Melanie’s beloved teacher while Paddy Considine is the military man trying to keep them safe. A zombie movie to make you shed a tear? “But of course my novel doesn’t have any zombies,” Carey asserts. “We don’t use the z word even once...” 🔗



RESIDENT EVIL: THE FINAL CHAPTER

DIRECTOR PAUL W. S. ANDERSON

STARRING MILLA JOVOVICH, ALI LARTER, SHAWN ROBERTS, IAIN GLEN, LI BINGBING

ETA 24 FEBRUARY 2017



This will be Milla Jovovich's sixth *Resident Evil*.

→ The everliving franchise rises once more from its slumber! This latest battle-themed instalment is a 3D sequel to 2012's *Resident Evil: Retribution*, and it's meant to be the last in the series. Production was unfortunately blighted by two serious accidents, one fatal. But despite this it's on track for a 2017 release. That's a sweet 15 years since it all began, fact fans: the original videogame adaptation crashed into multiplexes in 2002. Humanity is in bad shape these days and Alice's only hope is to head back to the place it all began, Raccoon City. There the evil Umbrella Corp is mustering its forces. In the plus column, she'll have help from a host of old friends. Minuses? She's lost her superhuman abilities. D'oh. 🧐

Because one gun is never enough.



The cast get together at Comic-Con.

PATIENT ZERO

DIRECTOR STEFAN RUZOWITZKY

STARRING NATALIE DORMER, MATT SMITH, STANLEY TUCCI

ETA 2 SEPTEMBER 2016

→ Originally known as *Patient Z*, this action flick is about a pandemic of "super rabies" that has turned most of humanity into diseased killers. But wait, what's this? One man (our own Matt Smith) seems resistant to the infection! He even has the ability to communicate with the mindless maniacs, one of which is his wife. Aided by the military and a virologist from the CDC (Natalie Dormer from *Game Of Thrones*) he goes on a quest to find a cure. Filming took place in England at Shepperton Studios and on the streets of London and Welwyn Garden City. Because nothing says "post-apocalyptic world" quite like a Hertfordshire suburb. 🧐

Q&A

NATALIE DORMER

The Patient Zero star talks stress-fuelled zombies, or rather, the 'infected'

How would you describe *Patient Zero*?

The shorthand hybrid you would say is it's *Contagion* meets *28 Days Later*.

What are the zombies like?

The infected – as they're called, because they're not the undead; they're not slow zombies, they're more rabid. The idea is it's a mutated form of rabies. They harness the adrenaline that we feel in this modern, stressful, 24/7 hyper-technology-ised world.

What makes *Patient Zero* current?

I think every generation has a monster which is appropriate for its need to cathartically release. This idea that we're all bombarded constantly by media, social media, having to get everything done yesterday, that a virus could actually harness that aggression and adrenaline, and turn it against mankind. That was the idea of the mutation of that. I was fascinated by the process.

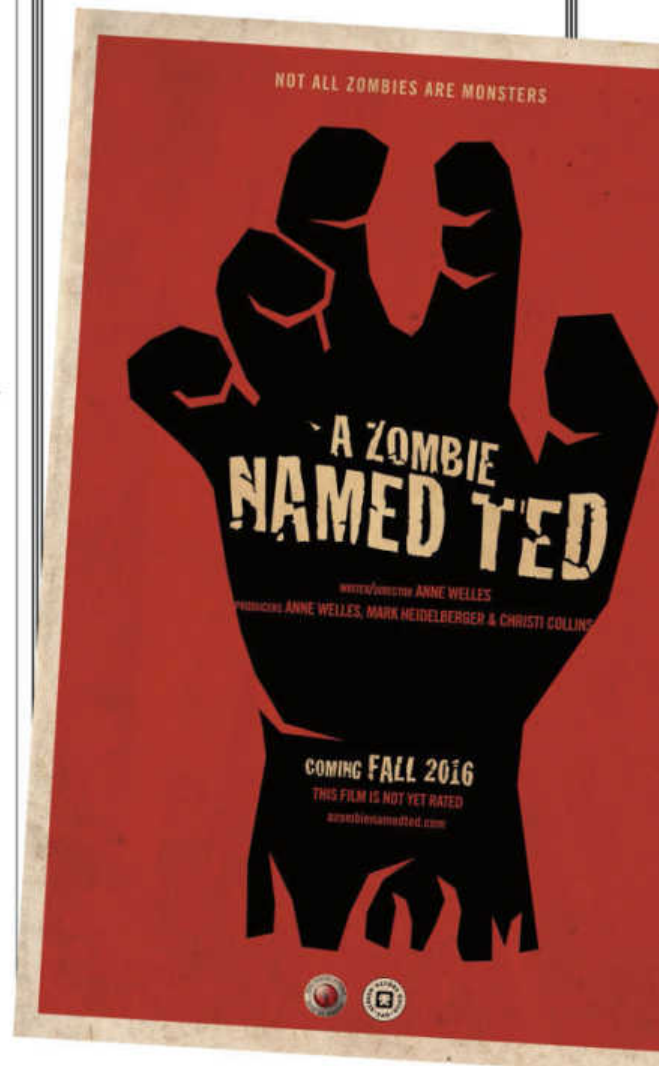
A ZOMBIE NAMED TED

DIRECTOR ANNE WILLES

STARRING NAOMI GROSSMAN, JOANNA SOTOMURA, YOSHUA SUDARSO, TANYA CHISHOLM

ETA TBC

→ Because what else would you call a zombie? Okay, this low budget zombie horror-com was still seeking full funding at the time of press but it's a promising premise so we remain hopeful. Ted (Sudarso) is a zombie-newbie half convinced he's picked up a "skin thing" from a jaunt in the Caribbean, who seeks help from a psychotherapist specialising in the paranormal and joins a therapy group with a sexy vampire. Or something. Willes has made a plethora of shorts but this is her feature debut and she's keen to emphasise the multicultural cast and the fact that it's helmed by a woman, which is frankly, unusual. It sounds like an unusual film, so here's hoping *Ted* rises soon. 🧐



NOT A ZOMBIE FILM!



last call

TRADITIONAL ZOMBIES MAY BE BITEY, ROTTING, REANIMATED UNDEAD BUT ZOMBIE THEMES HAVE SPAWNED HORDES OF FILMS WHICH DEVIATE FROM THE RULES. IN NEW STEPHEN KING ADAP **CELL** A PHONE SIGNAL TURNS THE MASSES MURDEROUS. DIRECTOR **TOD WILLIAMS** GIVES US A RING.

WORDS **ROSIE FLETCHER**

Must have been a bad guff.



“What was fun to me was we actually show the event”

John Cusack has an important phone call to make...

“It’s got a really clear beginning point, which is that... it’s really not a zombie film,” says director Tod Williams. “We ended up being surprised at how hard we had to work to make it not be a zombie film. Because Stephen King dedicated the book to Romero...” Williams is chatting to us from New York about his latest movie *Cell*, heading to our screens this June. And for a film that’s definitely not a zombie movie, there’s a lot of talk about zombies...

The premise, then: “It takes place one day, one fine day. Everybody who’s using their cell phone gets a signal in their ear that essentially wipes their brain clean and resets them to the sort of violent animal [state]. And there’s a series of revelations about what they’re actually becoming,” explains Williams. Based on a 2006

Stephen King novel, *Cell* is a mix of science fiction and the occult, with the strong family strand King’s works are known for. John Cusack plays New England artist and survivor of the pulse, Clay, who bands together with fellow survivors Samuel L. Jackson and Isabelle Fuhrman to discover the source of the mysterious signal and to find and reunite with his son, while the mindless and violent ‘Phoners’ are growing more organised and more threatening.

Unlike zombies then, King’s Phoners aren’t undead and decomposing and they can still talk. “It’s not something you can catch, but there’s ways – ‘The Pulse’ [as the original signal is called] continues to find victims,” says Williams. “So the thing grows. But essentially, yeah, it’s about one moment in time when most people are either converted or not. People who are not, are almost immediately killed. So there are very few survivors left.

“But then there are moments when our little band of survivors almost becomes more brutal than the Phoners themselves. There’s a wonderful biologist at Harvard named Edward O. Wilson who writes about ‘eusocial animals’ [from

the Greek ‘good/real + social’]. There’s social animals, which include the social and the eusocial animals – humans, ants, bees, wasps and termites – which have dominated the planet to an astonishing degree. Human beings are the most social.

“But the eusocial animals, which are like the ants and the bees, are essentially one organism – so a hive of bees is not actually a group of individuals, but it’s one organism. And it’s very, very successful. There’s some selflessness in that that’s admirable. We thought a little bit about Wilson’s theories of eusocial animals, in terms of what these creatures are.”

ZERO HOUR

Williams says despite a modest budget we can still expect action set-pieces.

“What was fun to me was, unlike a lot of the great current crop of zombie things like *The Walking Dead* and *28 Days Later*, which usually cut to some time after [the outbreak], we actually show the event, which was ambitious for a small film,” Williams says. While in the original novel Cusack’s character Clay experiences ‘The →

NOT A ZOMBIE FILM!



It's enough to make you throw away your iPhone.



Besides everything else, it looks really cold.

Pulse' from Brooklyn Common, the film version has opted for a more claustrophobic environment, re-locating the key moment to an airport.

"Because of this book, I've become kind of anti-the internet, anti-cell phones, anti-anything-digital," laughs Williams, talking to us via his cell phone. "As you think about it King sort of sees something satanic, almost, in the digital world. And the more I thought about it, the more convinced I became. But one of the places I feel we as a society allow ourselves to become our most base selves is once we pass through security

in an airport. We give up our sense of responsibility. Airports have become these stations of consumption. People indulge massively in all kinds of ways. It was in airports that I felt people most connected, most wanted to be connected. You see people plugged into these power sources all the time. I don't know. It just seems like, to me, the digital future is going to look and feel like that.

"A modern airport could be on the back side of the moon. It's this digital, soulless environment. I love planes, but I'm talking about the other part, the fear-filled mall that precedes flying. After you've gone through security where you've given up your adult responsibility. What's also interesting is that people aren't armed. Once you get through security, you've all been stripped of your weapons in some way. So that's where we find our hero when 'The Pulse' happens."

TALKING DEAD

Shot in January 2014 over 25 days in a combination of real locations and sets in

Atlanta, Georgia, the airport scene was partially created in a convention centre, with Williams and the director of photography given permission to go to a real airport later to get further environment shots ("So we're interlacing reality with our created reality"). But Atlanta came with some baggage too in the form of *The Walking Dead* (much of which is shot in that area).

"We're looking for things we need to put in our apocalyptic city, which we're not in very long and my team found me this burned-out bus, and they were like, 'This is so awesome, this burned-out bus. We can drag it here. It'll look great,'" Williams recalls. "But that burned-out bus was in the pilot of *The Walking Dead*. I was like, 'Come on, man.' The challenge of shooting in Atlanta

was avoiding *The Walking Dead*. And yet, there were also some really great experienced people that we called upon who were *Walking Dead* alumni – both to learn what they knew, and avoid what they had done. One of the things we had to very quickly figure out is how do these creatures move. It's really easy to say to an extra, 'Stagger around.' But instantly they look like *The Walking Dead*."

The team had to call in a different kind of expert to develop their own unique set of movements, which adapt and change as the Phoners evolve throughout the film.



Aim for the head? Or not?

“Because of this book, I’ve become kind of anti-the internet”



Lot of guns in this film.



Cell isn't a movie for the faint-hearted. Of course.



Look, there's another one!



We can't blame them for having a beer or two.

"We went over to the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago and got a bunch of dancers to workshop with us and a bunch of improv actors. We spent three or four days just trying to come up with movements that reflect more like flocking behaviour, rather than zombie behaviour," William says.

"We found some stuff we really liked. Then on weekends, we invited a group of local dancers to spend their Saturdays with us, as we ran around in large groups trying to teach people how to move. And it really helped. It was done as volunteers, really. The second somebody would start moving like a *Walking Dead* zombie, I'd have to cut. Cut and reset."

HORROR HEAD

Williams is probably best known as the director of *Paranormal Activity 2* though he previously also adapted and directed the John Irving novel *The Door In The Floor* starring Jeff Bridges and

Kim Basinger, so Williams says he wasn't necessarily looking to do another horror when *Cell* came along. According to Williams it was the stars who initially swayed him.

"The project came to me with John Cusack already on board. John is a huge fan of the Romero films, and very knowledgeable about all things zombie," says Williams, and when Jackson signed up he couldn't have been happier. "John is an unbelievably warm-hearted person, and Sam's a pro and a gentleman. [Working with them] is kind of like getting in a BMW 7 Series. It's easier to drive because you're in the bomb!"

Mixing technophobia with insect psychology, zombie tropes with ballet moves, *Cell* looks set to be a complex epic. Williams assures us there'll be hints of humour too, as well as a mix of practical and digital effects ("in a movie that's a sort of anti-digital manifesto," smiles Williams, aware of the irony, "but sometimes you can't be a purist"). It may not be a straight up zombie movie but it still has its roots buried in horror.

"There's some gore in it, but I wouldn't say it's excessively gory," considers Williams. "I think that the experience of the film is very tense. I'd say there's a sense of suspense throughout the entire thing, that you're living in a world you're unsure of. It's unlike the zombies that we've come to know, where you understand the rules,

which are: they bite you, you turn into a zombie; if you shoot them in the head, they die. That's very consistent.

"What Stephen King is more interested in isn't a static set of rules. It's a continually changing evolution of some future version of humanity. So, there's a lot of mystery in what's happening. King is comfortable with mystery remaining. I think that's what draws me to it. It's unresolved, unlike a lot of horror. I think that's something I'm a huge proponent of, and something I loved when I worked on the *Paranormal* movies – especially the early ones.

"There's a desire to layer rules onto things. For me, when you get rules, you start getting away from the subconscious and away from the mystery, away from the unknown," he ponders. "And that's the heart of horror." 🧠

Cell opens in cinemas in June.



Ice cream vans: brilliant.



NOT A ZOMBIE MOVIE!

GIRL, INTERRUPTED.

Somewhere between a ghost and a zombie there's Nina. **Ben and Chris Blaine**, directors of acclaimed new British horror **Nina Forever**, talk death and the maiden...

WORDS ROSIE FLETCHER

When Rob's (Cian Barry) girlfriend Nina (Fiona O'Shaughnessy) is killed in a horrific car accident he and Nina's bereaved parents struggle to cope. But hope comes, in the form of Holly (Abigail Hardingham), a vibrant young woman willing to help Rob start fresh. Only there's a problem. Nina might be dead but she's still popping up at the most inappropriate moments... A hit at FrightFest 2015, this new feature from young Brit directors Chris and Ben Blaine is a fresh look at grief and the mess left behind in death, with a soft sense of humour (and lots of tasteful gore and nudity). We sit down with the brothers Blaine to get to the heart of the matter.

“It occurred to me it was three people sitting around often not wearing any clothes”



Rob is a fella who has some good luck and some bad luck...

Q. Can you tell us a bit about how *Nina Forever* came about? Was it difficult to get it off the ground?

Ben Blaine: It's the first feature that we'd made but not the first feature we'd written, we'd had various scripts in various stages of development for a while and we were fairly frustrated with the process. *Nina* is in some way typical of our ideas in that we tend to be quite odd. In different ways to *Nina*, but usually quite odd. We tend to push against the normal structures and the normal shapes that people like to put things in. *Nina* was this idea that had been sitting around in its various forms for ages. And it occurred to me it was basically three people sitting around talking often not wearing any clothes so it would be quite cheap.

Q. Was there a specific inspiration behind it?

BB: There's a lot of inspirations behind it, in the expression of grief and the relationships that we'd both been through by that time. What's quite nice about it is there's a lot of truth in it but like all good stories it's truth that's warped and shared so that it is very personal to us, but in showing it to people it becomes very personal to other people too so it's very open to interpretation.

Q. *Nina* comes back as a reanimated corpse whenever Rob and Holly have sex. But she's not really a zombie is she... how do you see her?

Chris Blaine: We wanted to look at death in a different way, so she's not just a ghost who can disappear and leave no trace. But she's not a

zombie who has lost the willpower and the brain space that she had when she was alive, it was wanting to have someone who could actually voice her experiences and the feelings that happen when you're dead. That metaphorical thing of the blood, of leaving a big old mess any time she's around felt really important to us. We were trying to write something about death in a different way rather than having to sit in one of the tropes that people before have invented.

BB: They're quite polarised aren't they and they felt like the two things we were trying to sit between. Ghosts – it's all the things about a person that you can admit you miss. So it's like, "I miss the way they laugh and I miss them playing the cello", it's all the things that you'd stand up →

NOT A ZOMBIE MOVIE!



Bad romance: can Nina and Rob last forever?

“The response from the horror crowd has been absolutely overwhelming”

in a funeral service and say I miss them because of this. And then zombies are monstrous and horrible and as soon as someone turns into a zombie you want to shoot them and they're a baddie now. There's a weird embarrassment and shame with grief and some of the things you miss about someone, and it is horrific. But we wanted her to be really attractive and be really sexy and for people to be drawn to her at the same time as also horrified by her. It's both of those things.

Q. Because this film is quite gory in its own way...

CB: Yeah the monstrosity was really important to us. Generally when you watch a film about grief, it's like, "Oh, they're sad." But that's not all how it is. It's got every single emotion going on. You have somebody who's coming back and you're being confronted with the way that they died, again and again. Even whilst you totally love them and totally want them back – all of those things are wrapped in one. Because that is what happens when somebody dies. You're not able to just sit there thinking, "Oh, well it was nice back before anything went wrong."

Q. There's an element of black comedy in

there too, though...

CB: All the shorts we've made are comedies. All the features that we've been writing were generally quite serious. *Nina* felt like a really good first feature because it combines the two.

Q. Do you see it as a horror?

CB: We didn't see it as a horror. When we'd written it and we were showing it to people, mainly in a kind of "We're going to make this story" way, we were describing it as a horrific, magic-realist romance. It was really helpful

getting reviews and talking to audiences about what it actually is. I think audiences were not quite sure exactly what it is, and they quite liked that. We were really worried that some people wouldn't like it because it's not a straight horror.

BB: But the response from the horror crowd has been absolutely overwhelming. It's been wonderful. I think what it really brought home is how horror is a genre which really attracts cine-literate people. It really attracts people who love film in all of its shapes and forms. Often, horror films are the most cinematic expression of something. We've met so many people who are like, "No, it absolutely is a horror movie, and it's a brilliant horror movie."

Q. Tell us a bit about the shoot.

BB: Yeah, it was all roughly shot in South London and two trips to the seaside over 26 days.

Q. On location or on sets?

BB: On our budget, we thought it'd all have to be location-based. A large proportion of the film



Let's hope he has a good washing powder.



Aren't bathtimes meant to be fun?

takes place in the one flat and then in the one bedroom. So we went around various flats with our DP and looked at places. But by the time you've got a camera in the room, the room is tiny. We were scratching our heads, and our designer Damien drew up this sketch and was like, "I've always seen the space like this." We looked at it and knew it was absolutely what the place had to be and it was brilliant – and that no flat on Earth actually looked like that, with the ability to be able to get in and shoot. We also looked around and were like, "I think we have to have a studio, don't we?" Damien was like, "We can't, not on this budget. We can't do it." We were like, "You've just designed us a space. We can do this."

CB: He was still saying, "No, this can't be done," and then went and found us a studio to shoot in – which is actually Richard and Judy's old studio, which is quite fun to be in. So yeah, he found us that, got us a deal there, and committed himself to building this place, which was quite a good thing because the budget was tiny.

Q. A lot of it is pretty much a three-hander. The cast had to do some really heavy lifting between the three of them, including gore, sex and nudity as well as all the emotional stuff. How was it working with them?

CB: They were brave. We deliberately set out to find people who would be brave enough in the first place. We sent the full script to everyone, so that they could read the whole thing, so that they knew what they were getting into, rather than some scenes they were going to read from and then going, "By the way, the rest of it? Er, yeah... you're completely naked. But it's for artistic reasons!" We tried to be totally upfront about it. And the three of them were really brave about it. We made sure we were doing closed sets and trying to keep as many people away as possible. Every single day, we would have our handheld monitor that we'd turn around and show them exactly what we were shooting.

Q. What was the toughest part of the shoot for you?

CB: It was tricky every day. Partly it was the way that we'd shot it and made it. There was a lot of dialogue. The way of performing it realistically, everything slowed down, and that felt great and we didn't want to change that. But that did mean that every scene took a long time. So we were always struggling to try to get everything shot. Especially when you're working with blood and having to reset all that sort of stuff. That gets even more tricky. For a film that you're going, "Yeah, it's just three people in a bedroom!" – there're loads of locations. There's about 26 locations. We were always breathing a sigh of relief by the end of the day, if we'd managed to get everything.

BB: But also, we went into it with this manifesto that we'd drawn up with our friend which is basically about making things hard for yourself. It's thinking on the principle that a lot of the time when you have to make a film, you're trying to make things easier because it's so difficult to make a film and it costs a lot of money. But as an audience member, you don't want to watch easy films. No one ever comes out of a film going, "I've thoroughly enjoyed that. I can tell that they finished every day on time and on budget." We thought of things we could do to make it hard, in a way. It did then pay off because I think that an audience can instinctively feel the risk that one is taking. The creative risk, the commercial risk; just the risk that we're asking the cast to take for those scenes. Instinctively, the audience feels that and goes with you – everyone is doing that jump with you; and when you get to the other side, everyone feels delighted. 🚫



Well, that's a waste of a gravestone.

Nina Forever is out now on DVD and Blu-ray.

The HEROES, *not the* HORDE

David Towsey, author of **The Walkin' Trilogy** on sympathetic zombies and standing out from the crowd.

Two years ago my debut novel, *Your Brother's Blood*, was published and my love-hate relationship with zombies began proper. Before then, we'd been relatively ignorant of each other – I'd seen some of the canonical films from Romero et al at sleepovers, my face half-buried in a pillow. For their part, the zombies had no idea who I was. Then I wrote a book, a book I never consciously thought of as zombie-fiction until other people started calling it that, and suddenly the shuffling

horde turned their cold, dead gaze on me. I found myself asked to write blog posts and answer interview questions as if I was an expert on movies I could barely watch all the way through and books I'd never heard of, let alone read.

Like a secondary character without a surname, all I could do was succumb to the zombie tide. I mainlined the three seasons of *The Walking Dead* that were then available, the *Evil Dead* franchise, and as many examples of zombie-fiction as I could stomach. Luckily, I have some friends who are ardent and discerning horror fans, who weren't short on recommendations. I muddled

my way through the promo material, often starting with a confession of my n00b status not unlike this one.

But in doing that research I stumbled upon a number of texts that were a bit different and a bit uncomfortable with their zombie status. I found reviews of those books that started with lines like, 'Not your ordinary zombie book' and 'I don't normally like zombie stories, but...' In short, I'd found my remote farmhouse in which to hole up with a few like-minded writers as the traditional zombies closed in.

It's those writers, and the themes I think they share, that I want to talk about here, with a few examples from my own work thrown in. For ease, and because I'm essentially a lazy person, I'm going to label this loose collective of texts and writers 'sympathetic', which is about as touchy-feely as it sounds and really means that these stories use zombies as more than target practise for high calibre assault weapons. Later, I'm going to use the term as a verb and things will get really messy.

So, there are a few key elements that I think set sympathetic zombie texts apart from their traditional brethren. I want to emphasise that: apart. Not better, not worse, just different. It should go without saying (but I'm going to say it anyway) that there's zero value judgement attached to my rambling thoughts; if you love texts that conform, with however much originality, to the traditional tropes of the zombie then that's great and I'm sure the rest of this →



The Walking Dead is by far the most popular zombie TV show ever.

“A few key elements set sympathetic zombie texts apart from their traditional brethren”



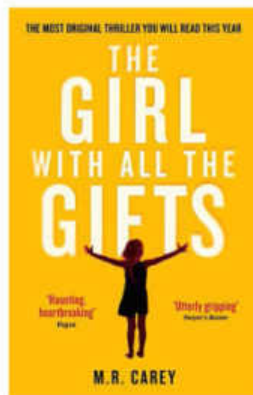
The 1990 remake of *Night Of The Living Dead* doesn't disgrace the original.

special issue has got you covered. But we're living in an age when the kind of books I write, and the others I'm going to look at, exist alongside *Red Dead Redemption* zombie-expansions and five *Resident Evil* movies (seven if you count the animated ones).

The zombie, more than any other creature-feature favourite, used to be about the collective and about conformity. I think that's changed, which leads me nicely on to my first point about the sympathetics.

'YES! WE'RE ALL INDIVIDUALS!'

The vast majority of sympathetic texts I've read involve, in some degree or other, writing from the point of view of a zombie character. This can be either as the story's protagonist, or as part of an ensemble of central characters; the first two books in my *Walkin'* trilogy have sections told from a zombie's point of view alongside sections told from a human's. *Raising Stony Mayhall* by



Daryl Gregory, *My Life As A White Trash Zombie* by Diana Rowland, and M. R. Carey's *The Girl With All The Gifts* are just a couple of examples where a zombie point of view is used to great effect.

There are some obvious things that such a point of view does, which are not typically present in a zombie narrative. We get the zombie perspective on decomposition, eating brains and simply what it feels like to be a zombie. These go well beyond moments of empathy found in

non-sympathetic texts, such as the 'They're us, we're them' ending of the 1990 remake of *Night Of The Living Dead*. But when you push aside the often gory details and descriptions of life as a zombie, there is a much bigger paradigm shift at work here than just a simple act of de-familiarisation.

Part of what has made the zombie such an appealing monster and negative force for storytelling is their complete lack of individual

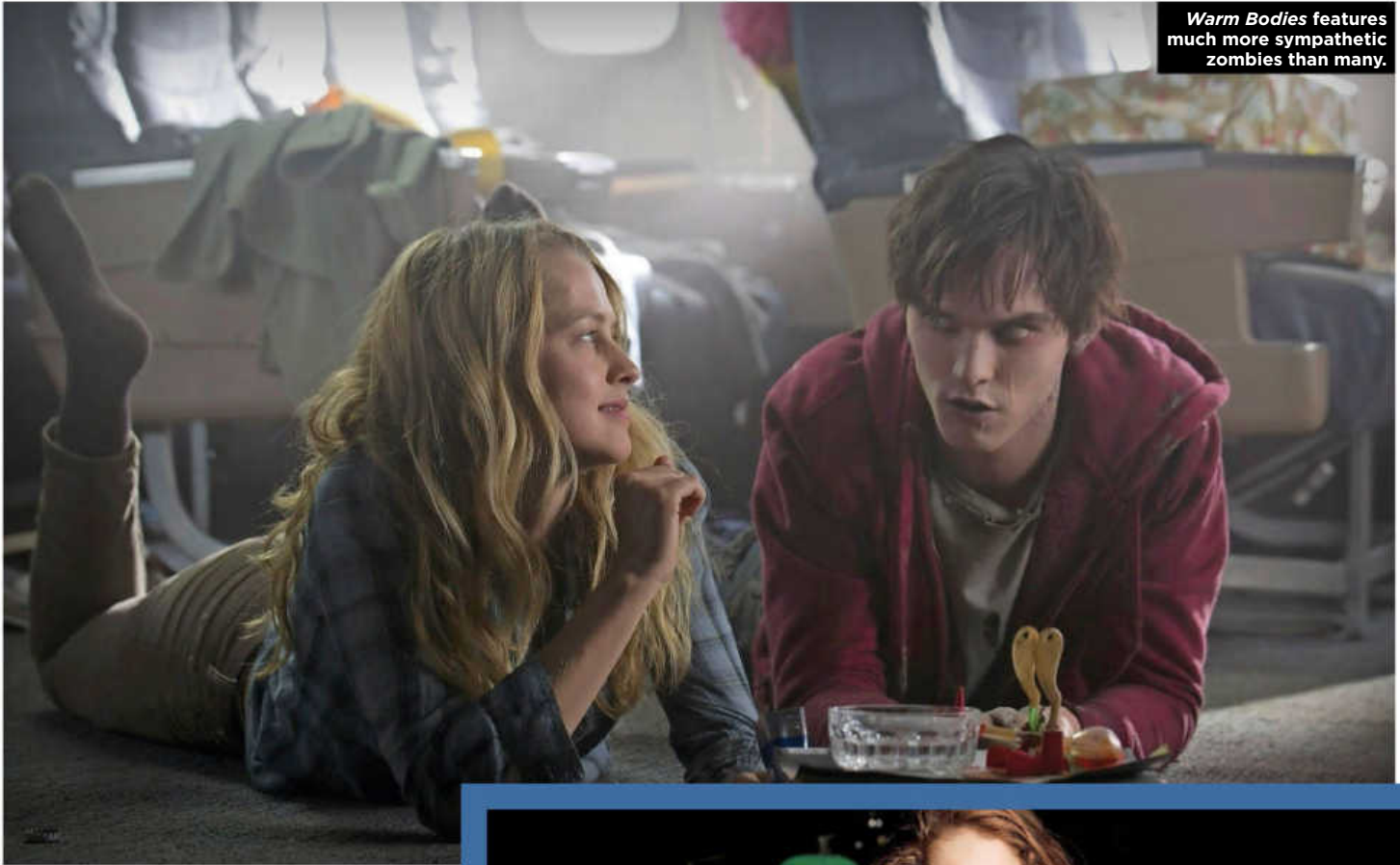
identity. This has become so ingrained, so much a part of the zombie mythos, that it is extremely rare to find a movie or book that has just one zombie. One vampire, one werewolf, one swamp-thing, can often be enough, but one zombie isn't frightening anyone; they come in hordes, that's a given. Sure, this probably has something to do with the fact numbers and crowds can be frightening; put enough cute cats in a room and it's actually pretty freaky. I only have four cats myself, but there are times I walk into my sitting room to find them all staring at me, and it's always me that backs slowly out of that room... I digress.

There's been a great deal of research about the dehumanising nature of crowds. We lose our sense of individual identity, become part of something bigger and act in ways we wouldn't normally. I think a zombie horde takes this idea to the extreme, and moving away from the crowd mentality has some pretty huge implications for a writer interested in the sympathetic zombie.

And that's because stories in the Western world are invariably depictions of the ideology of individualism in action: one person, a hero, takes on a government, a company, an alien race, etc. That hero gains allies, faces setbacks, is granted various rewards for their deeds, and inevitably triumphs to some degree or another having learnt something along the way. We readers live vicariously through those heroes because we ourselves are individuals: we can put ourselves in their shoes. It's really hard to put yourself in thousands of shoes at the same time, and isn't

“Part of what has made the zombie such an appealing monster is their lack of individual identity”

Warm Bodies features much more sympathetic zombies than many.



© KOBAL (2)

that what a zombie horde really is: thousands of shoes?

Take a well-known sympathetic text like *Warm Bodies* by Isaac Marion. Our hero and narrator, R, is a zombie, but he's different from other zombies—

Loud, claxon noise, like the one from Family Fortunes with Les Dennis when a contestant gets an answer wrong

You can't have a zombie that's different from other zombies – that's the point of zombies. They're all the same, all driven by the same urge, a relentless, nameless force that cannot be reasoned with.

But R falls in love. R likes music. R thinks about stuff. Why? Because the story requires him to; without R doing that there's no story – not in any recognisable sense. A zombie point of view is not a zombie at all, not really, because it has to embrace the power and trappings of individualism.

This is why I don't mind when zombie fans say my novels aren't zombie-fiction at all. I get it. The people who market my books have to say something about them, just like I do when I'm asked what I write at parties, at conventions, at bars (no one talks to me in bars, but if they did I can just imagine how "I write zombie-fiction" would go down). The more I dance around the subject, mumbling things like "they're dead, and you know, decaying, but they can talk and stuff," the more annoyed the person gets and just says, "Zombies, right? I love *The Walking Dead*."

What can an aspiring writer of the sympathetic zombie do in the face of this



The Returned offers more of a family spin on the genre.

fundamental problem? Well, *Warm Bodies* is one of the best demonstrations of the zombie vs. individual challenge that I've come across, and as such it suggests one clunky but effective solution: different types of zombies. There's Fleshies, which are in line with the traditional zombie in terms of their state of decomposition, eating of brains and general levels of lethargy. The hero R is a Fleshie. And then there's Boneys, who are little more than skeletons, but far more active and deadly. The Boneys occupy the story space usually reserved for zombies: they're the ones that provide danger, tension and the negative force that is trying to stop our sympathetic

zombie hero. Personally, I found them the least compelling element of the story, but that's hardly surprising; I don't watch *The Walking Dead* to see which zombies are going to get stabbed, bludgeoned, or shot this week. I watch to see how my favourite individuals are getting on. The Boneys serve a narrative function: they fill the void created when R and his friends decide to become individuals, to become the heroes and not the horde.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

That said, here's the thing about individuals: we don't exist alone. No man's an island, and →

all that. This gets really interesting for sympathetic zombie characters, and was perhaps the biggest draw of this kind of story for me as a writer. Once you break enough canonical rules and establish that a zombie is actually an individual, they inevitably start making relationships. In *Warm Bodies*, R has his love for Julie and his friendship with M. In my books the zombie characters have families to look after. As if families weren't complicated enough, right?

One of my main characters, Thomas, has to grapple with the idea that he will outlive his own daughter. And his daughter's daughter, and so on. In our world, far too many parents have to face the real horror of outliving their own children, and it is this difficult concept that I wanted to explore. But having a zombie character further complicates the situation by suggesting a possible alternative: what if his daughter was to become a zombie? Is it preferable that she suffers through all the awful things that he has, but lives as a zombie, or better for her to die and stay dead? Sympathetic texts like mine gain some of their power because grappling with tough decisions that affect ourselves is hard, but facing the same decisions that will affect our loved ones is torture.

For my money, no other sympathetic text has managed the importance of family with such finesse, such grace and such heart-breaking brutality as *The Returned*. In this show a community is revisited by men, women and children who had died, but have now reappeared many years later, seemingly unchanged and unaware of their own deaths. Like the characters in my *Walkin'* books, these 'returned' can talk, think, feel and, despite some of them being proper creepy, they are just about the same as the day they died. The show, now in its second series, covers a wide range of relationships that are affected by this unexplained phenomenon; and those relationships provide the real focus. As is the case in so many sympathetic texts, there's no calling in of the National Guard, no barricades in the streets, and no rushing for the local armoury. The dead slowly, quietly return to their homes as if nothing has happened. How do their families react, given that their own lives have inevitably moved on? That's what the show handles flawlessly.

My favourite example from the first series (spoiler warning) is the return of Camille, a young girl who we are led to believe died on a school trip. Her mother – played by Anne Cosigny, whose performance is nothing short of stunning – has never really recovered from Camille's death, and when her daughter returns she is torn between terror and joy. It may sound ghoulish, but the mother's tension between knowing something isn't right, isn't natural, and her not caring because it means she has her



Some have found the use of children in *The Walking Dead* quite disturbing.

“If everything we read was safe and comfortable we'd never ask any serious questions of ourselves”

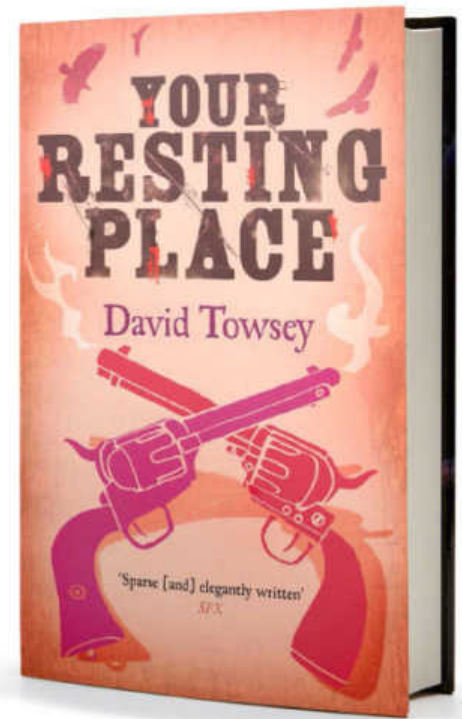
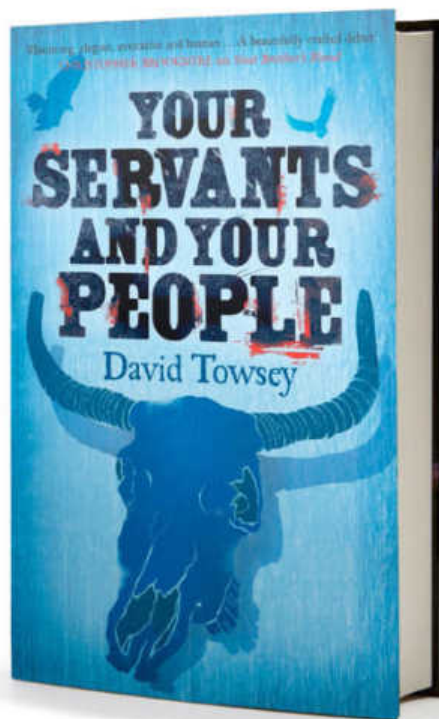
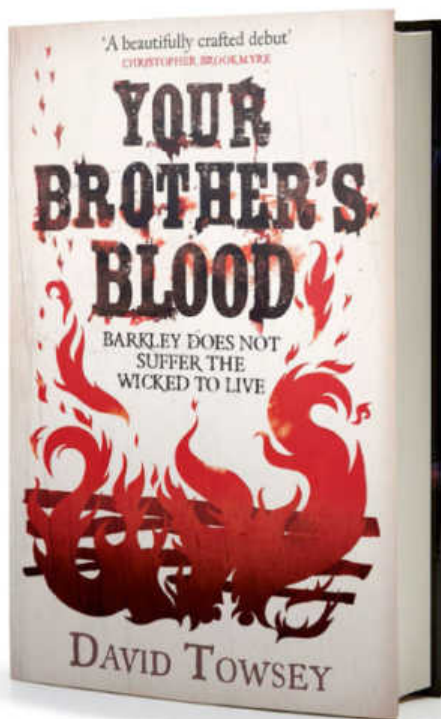
daughter back is truly fascinating to watch. But that's not even the best bit.

Camille has a sister, Lena, who isn't happy to see her. In the early episodes there's something about Lena's reaction that doesn't quite sit right. Sure, she should be freaked out, who wouldn't? But the show masterfully hints at something deeper. And then, bam! In a rare moment of actually answering something, the show reveals (further spoiler ahead) Lena and Camille weren't just sisters, but twins. A 15-year-old Camille looks up at her 19-year-old twin, and I'm left picking myself up from the floor. I'm not a twin, but there's something very powerful and unexpected about this moment of head fuckery, and I haven't found anything like it since.

'WILL SOMEONE PLEASE THINK OF THE CHILDREN?'

Something I've noticed about the zombie canon, in contrast to contemporary zombie texts, is the absence of children; in many of the zombie classics there simply aren't any. Promiscuous teens, sure, but not really young kids. It's a kind of lost demographic. It's not hard to come up with some suggestions as to why this might be: audiences during the early evolution of the subgenre were scared plenty by the introduction of gore and 'jumpy moments' into cinemas. Even to the most desensitised viewers and readers, things happening to kids is still quite shocking. So, going sympathetic is one way (but not the only way) of reintroducing this lost generation.

Plenty of sympathetic texts have really young



central characters: Victor in *The Returned*, Stony Mayhall in *Raising Stony Mayhall*, and Melanie in *The Girl With All The Gifts* to name just a few. Thinking about these zombie kids and why writers seem drawn to them, made me recall an exhibition I saw recently at a museum of Italian film; you'll have to forgive the tangent, I promise it's relevant.

A number of Italian neorealist films feature prominent child characters, perhaps the best known being Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*. Young Bruno follows his father around Rome as they look for a stolen bicycle that is the difference between life and death for their poor family. Bruno's innocence is a stark and undeniable mirror in which we see both the desolation of the Second World War and the life that awaits his generation of survivors. This innocence can also be found in sympathetic texts through characters such as Melanie in *The Girl With All The Gifts* (more spoilers, I'm afraid).

Melanie is a young zombie girl – though the reader doesn't know that from the outset – who attends a special kind of school. There, she learns all about a world she has never seen, a history that isn't hers, and a moral code that seems utterly inappropriate for who she is. During these lessons she develops an intense love for one of her teachers, Helen Justineau, which not only drives much of the narrative but also provides an important counterpoint to the callous, brutal survivalism that dominates the rest of the novel – and much of the zombie genre more generally. Melanie, like little Bruno in *Bicycle Thieves*,

questions the behaviour of the adults around her and the rules of her world, and in doing so forces the reader to do the same.

It's worth noting that the contemporary move to include children in zombie texts is not just limited to sympathetic narratives. *The Walking Dead* seems to have taken this shift on board wholesale, with plenty of child characters and even a newborn baby; something that would be unthinkable in the survival-centric zombie flicks of old. But in *The Walking Dead* that tarnished mirror of childish innocence is not just presented to the audience, it's thoroughly smashed. Obliterated. Children in this show do some messed up stuff. The fourth series, featuring the young girls Lizzie and Mika, was when a lot of my friends said 'enough is enough'. They stopped watching. It was a point of no return, a point where the bleakness and despair reached such a tight focus that they could not go on. They'd managed episode after episode of gore and violence and man's inhumanity. But they couldn't handle Lizzie and Mika, so they stopped watching.

Now, that sounds like a bad thing. And clearly the point of most entertainment – especially mainstream entertainment – is to keep people's attention and interest, not push them away. But horror is a genre known for pushing boundaries. That's part of its appeal, but also part of why it's important. If everything we watched and read was safe, comfortable and life-affirming, we'd never ask any serious questions of ourselves. Knowing the point you won't go beyond,

whatever the context, is a really significant aspect of knowing who you are as a person, and horror can help a little with that.

THE FUTURE

Pushing boundaries and a kind of reflective innocence are just two elements that young characters can offer the zombie genre. They also allow sympathetic and traditional stories alike to think about the future of their worlds. To ask: what's next? What will the world look like for Karl, Melanie, Stony, or Mary and Ryan in my trilogy? And I think that's the kind of question facing the zombie genre as a whole right now. Where do we want to go? What kinds of stories do we want to tell, to read, to see? The zombie has been, rather appropriately, slower than some of its undead brothers and sisters to evolve, but evolving it is. What is possible for a writer to explore within the subgenre is expanding, however uncomfortable the label of zombie-fiction might feel for some. And I think that's great. But then I would, wouldn't I? Thanks to that expansion, thanks to high profile zombie-fictions of all kinds, a publisher looked twice at my odd little zombie-Western trilogy where the zombies are fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters. Where the zombies are sympathetic. Where readers who 'don't normally like zombie stories, but...' can find a few surprises. 🧟

David Towsey's Your Brother's Blood, Your Servants And Your People and Your Resting Place are available from Jo Fletcher Books.

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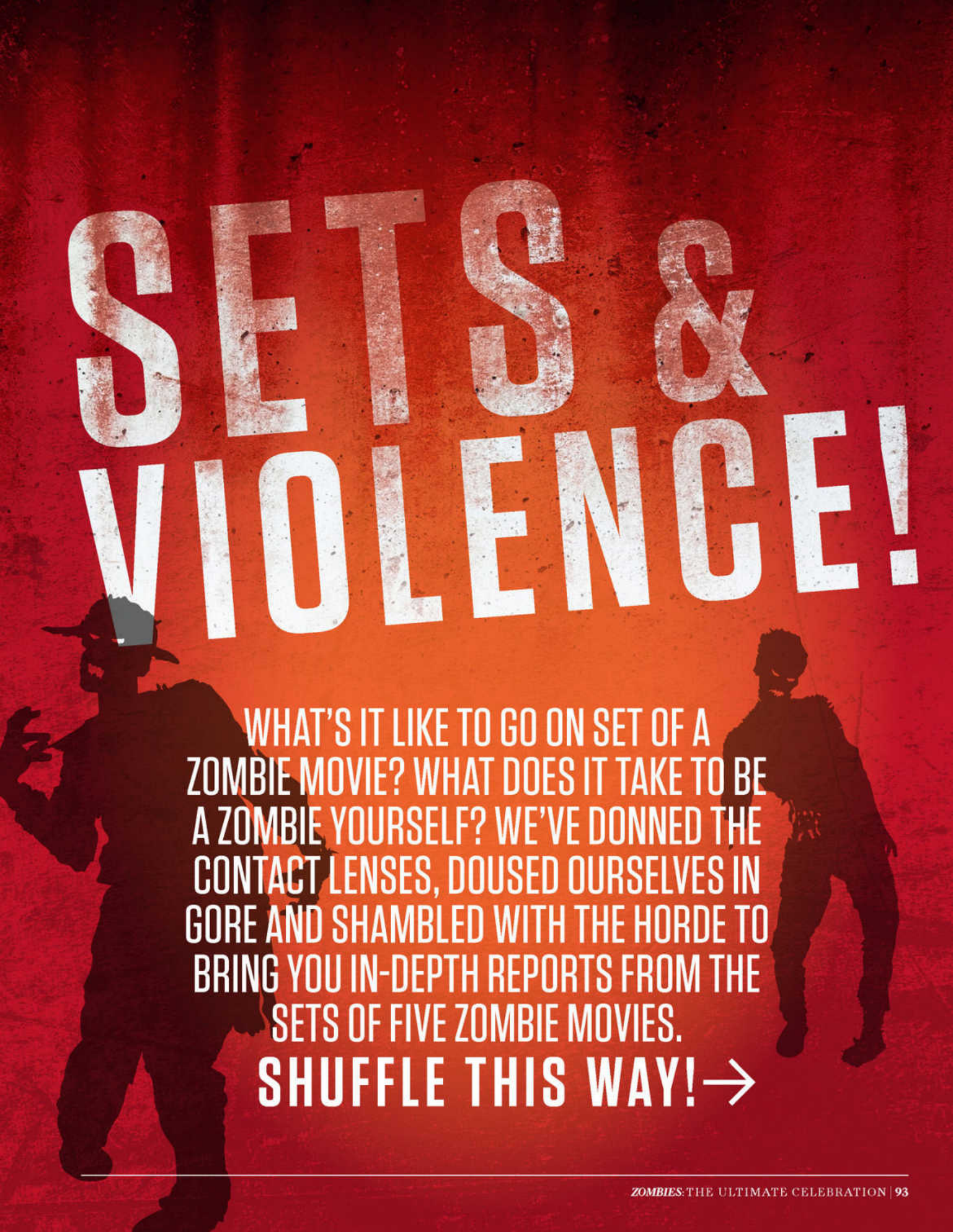
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SETS & VIOLENCE!

The background is a solid, textured red. Two black silhouettes of zombie figures are positioned on either side of the central text. The figure on the left is in a dynamic, lunging pose, while the figure on the right is in a more upright, shambling pose. Both figures appear to be wearing masks or have facial features that suggest they are zombies.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO GO ON SET OF A ZOMBIE MOVIE? WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A ZOMBIE YOURSELF? WE'VE DONNED THE CONTACT LENSES, DOUSED OURSELVES IN GORE AND SHAMBLED WITH THE HORDE TO BRING YOU IN-DEPTH REPORTS FROM THE SETS OF FIVE ZOMBIE MOVIES.

SHUFFLE THIS WAY! →

THE DEAD ZONE

IT'S THE KILLER VIDEOGAME ADAP
THAT SPAWNED FOUR SEQUELS AND A
HUGE FRANCHISE, BUT BACK IN 2001 WE
VISITED THE SET OF WHERE THE
RESIDENT EVIL EPIDEMIC BEGAN...

WORDS MARK SALISBURY

Trust me," says Milla Jovovich, "there's a lot of suffering that goes into wearing a tiny wet dress." She lifts the grey blanket that's currently covering her, exposing an excuse of a red chiffon dress, combat boots and not much else.

The point, of course, is to give us a close-up look at the cuts and bruises she's sustained filming the movie adaptation of gorefest videogame *Resident Evil*. "I did some rolling on the grills which left marks *here*... and a big huge bruise *there*," she says, revealing a few more minor scrapes. It's nearing the end of *Resident Evil*'s shoot in Berlin and the then 25-year-old Ukraine-born actress, model and sometime musician has spent the

previous seven weeks battling blood-crazed zombies, undead dogs and an enormous, slimy monstrosity called "The Licker". Today Jovovich, who plays amnesiac zombie-hunter Alice, has been shooting a scene towards the movie's climax which involves the aforementioned Licker (a CG creation that'll be added later) trashing a subway train, complete with all the requisite pyrotechnics. As if that wasn't physically demanding enough, she reveals she spent most of the previous week underwater, working on scenes in a flooded laboratory set. "It was 16 hours spent in freezing water. I was pretty much half-naked and I had to dunk myself in 35, 40 times during the day." She puts her bruises away and sighs. "It's trying, to say the least." →





Resident Evil isn't short of gunplay – or zombies.

© KOBAL (4)

The movie version of *Resident Evil* was a long time in development. Inspired by George A Romero's *Dead* trilogy, the claret-drenched shoot 'em up first lurched onto the PlayStation in 1996 and has since spawned an enormous franchise including multiple game sequels and spin-offs, novels, comic books and action figures.

Soon after the release of the first game, the movie rights were bought by German production company Constantin, which commissioned a script from *Spawn* scribe Alan McElroy. "We said: 'This is gonna be easy!'" recalls executive producer Robert Kulzer. "A bunch of commandos go into a place, they shoot it up, blah, blah, blah. McElroy did a pretty good job. Then the second game comes out and all of a sudden your movie based on the first looks really dated and boring, and you say: 'What do we do now?'" What they did was certainly inspired. They went to Romero himself, who'd recently helmed a Japanese ad for the *Resident Evil 2* game, and said: "Let's do the ultimate zombie movie." Alas, after a number of drafts, Romero and Constantin parted ways,



The videogame-to-movie stuff of nightmares.

unable to agree on a new direction. "With George we could have done a great zombie movie for a very limited audience," reflects Kulzer. "We couldn't have shown it in a regular theatre, or even on TV. It could have been a \$52 million horror pic, but not a big event movie." So they opted instead to hire writer-director Paul WS Anderson, who'd previously directed *Mortal Kombat* – which, in the pre-*Tomb Raider* era, was the most successful videogame adaptation ever. Being a massive videogame fan, the British filmmaker had actually been pursuing the rights to the franchise independently, through his own production company Impact Films. "I love zombie movies and no one's done a great one in a long, long time," he tells us during a break from

ordering Milla (who would some years later become his wife) to bruise herself. "I remember watching classics like *Zombie Flesh Eaters* and the Romero movies while growing up and being scared shitless by the whole idea of zombies. You know, the terrifying prospect that your loved ones will not

only come back from the dead, but will want to eat you alive. I loved the game, loved the genre, and thought: 'This is a movie I wanna make.'" When he found out that Constantin and Romero already owned the rights, he began writing his own undead script anyway, which, he says, "was very much a rip-off of *Resident Evil*. It probably would have got me sued..."

DAYS OF GORE

Once onboard, Anderson incorporated many of his own ideas into the version Constantin owned which, in keeping with the company's desire for a mainstream movie, was not going to be anywhere near as gory as the game. "One of the things I learned from *Event Horizon* was that gore and terror don't necessarily go hand in hand," says Anderson. "If you have too much gore you lose the audience. They stop being terrified and start being revolted."

While the previous *Resident Evil* scripts had stuck closely to one or more of the games, Anderson came up with the idea of a prequel,

“If you have too much gore you lose the audience”

DAY AS THE UNDEAD

Make-up artist and extra Barry Best tells us what it's like playing an undead killer in Resident Evil...

How did you get cast in the role?

I was working for Animated Extras at the time, a make-up/animatronics company who were doing bits and bobs on *Resident Evil*. They just needed people to test the make-up on, and my face was right because I'm quite a slim build. Then Paul Anderson came in and saw the make-up tests...

Did you copy other movie zombies to get the walk right?

I just kind of wandered around as though I was pissed off. I dragged my heels and tried to look really ticked off with the whole thing. That's all I did really, but they seemed happy so I stuck with it.

What kind of direction did Paul WS Anderson give you?

I was being lead more by the choreography guy, but he would tell me to just go in and attack or whatever. Other than that I was pretty much left to my own devices.

Is it true your brother has also played a member of the undead?

Yeah, my brother Brian is in *The Mummy Returns*. He's one of the mummies in the British Museum. If you watch the DVD you can see him bang himself right up to the screen. It was exactly the same thing - he was just working on some of the effects stuff in *The Mummy Returns* and fell into it...

a movie that'd set up the *Resident Evil* universe and explain what went on before the events of the original game. This meant he could keep many elements from the games and also come up with a totally new set of characters.

"What we're trying to do is make a movie that works within the universe of *Resident Evil*," Anderson explains, "but which also allows us to give the fans a whole new adventure." The problem with coming up with a new adventure, however, was that it meant coming up with a new kind of zombie. "Michael Jackson kind of killed the genre," says producer Jeremy Bolt who also appears as three different zombies in the movie. "If you put more than three people



This is no time to be looking at YouTube!

with any kind of zombie make-up in a row, you can't help but imagine 'Thriller' kicking in." So how did they prevent their undead from looking like something out of an '80s music vid? "They're like the dead people in *The Sixth Sense* but grosser," explains Jovovich, grinning. "Some of them look like they had a car accident, with half their face coming off and stuff, while others just look as if they died of illness. But they all look really sick. The first day I worked with the zombies it was like when you see mould growing on your kitchen sink. I thought: I don't wanna get close to these people, they're dirty and spoiled. They look like an old cheese."

LADIES OF THE FIGHT

Despite her dislike of "old cheese" zombies, Jovovich was perfect for the lead role, mainly because she was herself a huge fan of the game. "I'd sit with my little brother for, like, five, six hours a day, and I thought: 'This would be such a great movie and I would be a great her, whoever she is.'" Indeed, Jovovich even went so far as to inquiring after the game rights herself, but eventually she got hold of Anderson's script. "I had a great time reading it. I was, like: 'I want this part. My brother is going to think I'm God.' And I convinced Paul that I was the only person capable of doing it. But it's true - the fact is I've had experience. On *The Fifth Element* I did all the

training I'd ever need for the rest of my life. It's like learning to ride a bicycle: once you learn how to kick, you can kick again. Plus, I'm good with the guns. I love guns and I'm a really good shot."

Joining Jovovich on her zombie hunt is Michelle Rodriguez, kick-ass star of *The Fast And The Furious* franchise, who plays Rain, a ballsy commando. Like both her director and co-star, Rodriguez was a fan of the game. "There aren't many good role-playing videogames out there, so when I got my hands on *Resident Evil* it was like being in a Hitchcock film," says the voluble actress, then aged 23, pounding on the table in excitement. "That's why I'm here, because the game's just amazing to play. When I first met my agent, the first thing I told her was: 'If there is ever a movie being made of *Resident Evil* I want that script. I don't care if I'm selling a hotdog in the damn thing, I'm going to be in there!'"

"Milla and Michelle are really sexy, but they're also convincing when they're firing guns and beating the shit out of things," Anderson says. "I love putting them in the same frame because they're so sparky." Despite the bruises, the long hours and the unpleasant conditions, Jovovich says she's having a blast - and she also sees it as good practice. "I'm always thinking about the apocalypse and what would happen if the end of the world came and I survived," she says. "I'd need guns to make sure I could take care of my family and go out there and get food and more bullets. I thought I'd start now, getting a licence and building up like a major artillery in my basement. So if the time ever came I could survive. I'm telling you, I would be one of those people. I have the physique for it." Of that, there's no question... 🚫

Resident Evil is out now on DVD and Blu-ray.



ON SET

PLAGUE GROUND

A TERRIFYING VIRUS, A DESERTED
LONDON AND HUNDREDS OF RAGING
INFECTED ROAMING THE COUNTRYSIDE —
DANNY BOYLE'S 28 DAYS LATER
RECHARGED THE ZOMBIE MOVIE.
BACK IN 2001 WE VENTURED ON SET...

WORDS MARK SALISBURY

28 DAYS LATER



On a damp, chilly night in deepest Wiltshire, things are getting creepy. Every time we look over our shoulder, there's a blood-stained zombie-man standing only inches away. His distinctly bored demeanour and the cigarette dangling from his mouth are the only

signs he's not preparing to lunge and tear out a chunk of flesh. But, although he's just dawdling until director Danny Boyle summons him for his next scene, we still don't like him being so close...

Finally, Boyle's ready to shoot, and the loitering fiend heads off to join the dozen other extras milling around this muddy field in late October. With their bloody faces and gore-splattered lips, they look like they've wandered straight out of George A Romero's *Living Dead* films. But these non-speaking stars of the *Trainspotting* director's groundbreaking horror are not meant to be dead at all. Which means that technically they're not zombies, but rather what the filmmakers are referring to as "infected": people who have been contaminated by a horrendous virus that, prior to the scene being shot tonight, has wiped out almost the entire population of the UK. Those who haven't died from this viral invasion have turned into raging, blood-crazed freaks. Freaks, mind you, whose ferocious, terrifyingly fleet-footed style of movement is rooted in fact.

"It's based on road rage, on what people look like when they're out of control," Boyle explains. "They move incredibly violently and quickly. I felt on reading the script that these people should move like cheetahs. Nothing stands in their way."

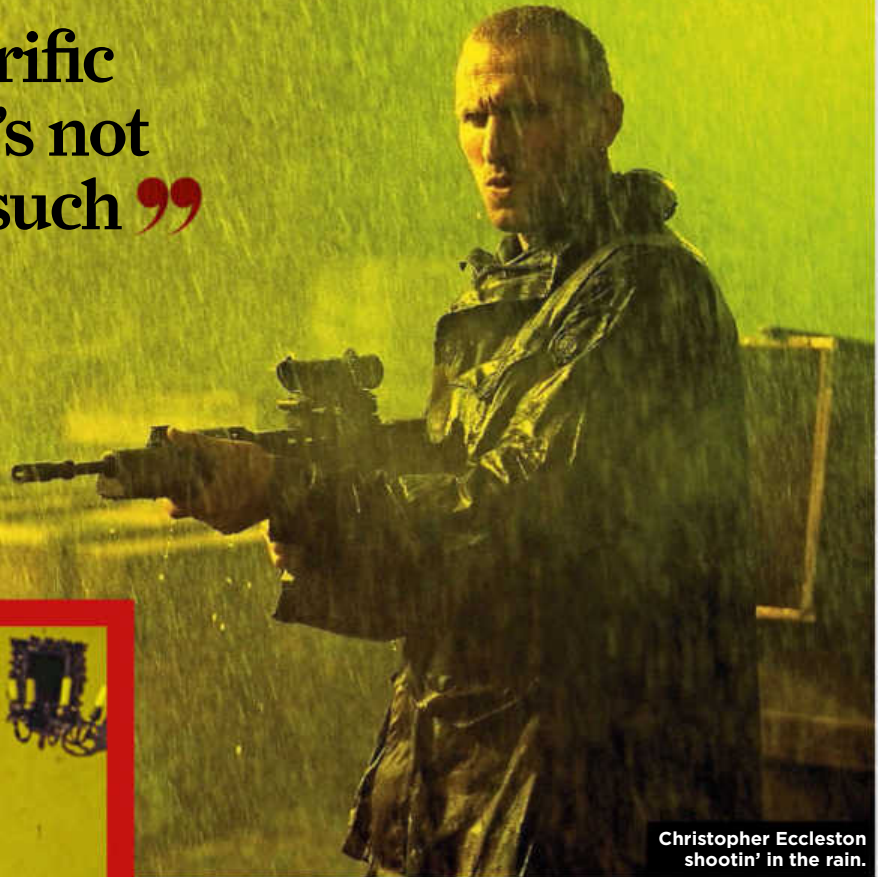
On Boyle's call of "Action!" the infected sprint across the field towards the rambling country pile in the distance, which, for filmic purposes, has been transformed into a makeshift fortress, complete with sentry tower, barbed-wire barricades, landmines and arc lights. Their motivation is clear: to kill the uninfected humans inside the house. "Stamp the ground as you run," Boyle instructs as they move off. "Make it as violent as possible."

LIFE'S A BEACH

After his much-trumpeted journey to Thailand to shoot *The Beach* with Leonardo DiCaprio, Boyle's happy to be back on home turf. "The big thing I learned from *The Beach* is that I'm not very good at countryside," he laughs, several months later in the warmer surrounds of his London offices. "*The Beach* was partly about nature and I don't like nature very much. I don't go to the countryside to enjoy myself. I get bored." Yet, despite the criticism that was levelled at him over the film, Boyle declares himself happy with *The Beach*. "I think it's a bit too mainstream for people, it drifted towards the mainstream."

For his part, Andrew Macdonald, producer on many of Boyle's films, acknowledges *The Beach* "knocked a fair amount of shine off our indie credentials," but says that one of the best things to come out of the experience was meeting novelist Alex Garland, on whose book the film

“There are horrific things in it but it’s not a horror film as such”



Christopher Eccleston shootin' in the rain.

© REX (3)



Because otherwise the end of the world would be no fun.

was based. “I became a close friend of Alex’s,” says Macdonald. “I like writers. Material is everything for an independent producer.”

After *The Beach*, Macdonald convinced Garland to write an original screenplay for him. The pair settled on the concept of a smart, British-set genre film, and soon Garland, a massive comic book and videogame fan, turned in a 60-page script inspired by Romero’s zombie trilogy, apocalyptic tales like *The Omega Man* and even the TV show *Survivor*.

“His idea was a post-apocalyptic movie where the threat was people who had a disease that, rather than turn them into zombies who moved very slowly, made them very, very dangerous and very, very fast,” says Macdonald, who loved the concept but worked with Garland to make it more realistic. “I told him we have to add more character, add the Ken Loach element, because the thing that would make it great was it was set in England, and that they’re ordinary people.”

28 Days Later kicks off with a virus being released from an animal research laboratory, then flashes forward four weeks to Jim – a bike courier played by Cillian Murphy – emerging from a coma in a London hospital to find the

(and possibly the world). Linking up with fellow survivors Selena (Naomie Harris), Frank (Brendan Gleeson) and Frank’s daughter Hannah (Megan Burns), Jim heads up to Manchester in search of a squad of British soldiers led by Christopher Eccleston, who have been broadcasting claims that they’ve discovered a cure. Once there, however, they discover a threat even greater than the infected...

What Boyle loved about Garland’s script was its underlying concept. “Although the virus manifests itself in the most horrific physical aggression, its root is psychological. It’s a very old idea, the virus wiping out mankind, but the twist was unique and that’s what you look for. Ultimately, it’s about our minds,” he says.

And about rage – a theme which is ripe for exploitation. “There does seem to be terrible rage going on,” muses Gleeson. “There’s road rage, air rage, all sorts of rage we have names for. People do seem to be seriously disaffected.”

In *28 Days Later*, this “rage” manifests itself in some truly gruesome ways, not least with its victims spewing buckets of blood (a touch inspired by Richard Preston’s stomach-churning, non-fiction account of the Ebola virus, *The Hot*

Zone). Not even Ebola, however, spreads as quickly as *28 Days Later*’s unnamed virus, with victims showing symptoms in less than 30 seconds. “Technically they may not spread that quickly,” admits Boyle, “but the potency of them in our minds says that they can.”

UNDEAD ZONE

So is it or isn’t it a zombie movie? At the time Boyle seemed quick to counter the claim, although his cast were less worried about the undead comparisons. “You shouldn’t be afraid to call it a zombie movie, there’s no shame in that,” insisted Eccleston. And yet, for a long time, Boyle wouldn’t even admit to *28 Days Later* being a horror film. “There are horrific things in it and there are some very unpleasant moments,” he said, “but it’s not a horror film as such.” In hindsight, in spite of this, we stand firm that *28 Days Later* is most definitely a horror film and even though the hordes are infected not undead, it falls within zombie lore.

Boyle’s reluctance to label his film a horror flick was not based on antipathy for the genre but a fear that it wouldn’t be marketed to the wider audience he felt it deserved to reach. In fact, he admits he shot several more traditional moments in deference to the wishes of horror fan Garland, but chose to leave them out.

“There was a great scene from Alex’s original script which we probably should have shot,” Macdonald recalls. “An ending that showed the survivors escaping the UK in a jumbo jet →



Everybody runs in this film. Everybody.

© KOBAL

which had infected hanging off the side of it and a blind pilot driving it away. And there was also a *Gremlins*-like scene where they drove past that media bar at the Park Lane Hotel, and you saw all these infected media types drinking in the bar. But they didn't really suit the mood in the end because the tone we decided upon was there were real people reacting to this situation."

DV CLINIC

After *The Beach*, Boyle helmed two "experimental" films for the BBC, *Vacuuming Completely Nude In Paradise* and *Strumpet*, which he shot on digital video. He found the experience so invigorating he decided to bring the technology and that "liberating" feeling to *28 Days Later*. Yet he's also concerned that revealing the film's DV origins might put some people off. "It's not dogme style," he insists. "Although the technical quality is limited, it has a kind of crude beauty that compensates for it."

Shooting the opening sequence – in which Murphy walks through a London totally devoid of people and traffic – was only possible, say Boyle and Macdonald, thanks to the smaller size and flexibility of DV cameras. It was shot during the course of a week in the very early hours of the morning, and the production would hold back the traffic for just long enough while shooting with up to four cameras at a time.

"In the script it's a quarter of a page," Boyle explains. "We just grew it to speak for the whole opening of the film, and to do all those things we couldn't do for financial reasons, the apocalyptic *Terminator* stuff." (Boyle wanted to turn the water in the Trafalgar Square fountains blood red but was denied permission.)

Back in the mud, Boyle is still directing his "infected" extras with the same energy and enthusiasm he puts into his main actors. "If you go to ground," he says to them after they've trudged back to their starting point, "thrash around as wildly as possible, make it really violent." And with that he sprints off after the "infected" and into the chill night air... 🚫

28 Days Later is available on DVD and Blu-ray.

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Killer germs! Killer microbes! Er... killer armpits? Run away! It's movie plagues!



THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN (1971)

The origin: A life-scoping satellite dawdling in space suddenly crashes back to Earth, bringing with it a microscopic virus.

The symptoms: Sweating and wheezing followed by a novel pay-off: the bacteria solidifies your blood. At least you save on bandages.

The cure: Two survivors from a wiped-out town – a tramp and a baby – are dragged to a subterranean facility for a methodic probe. The option of nuking the bug is a no-no as it expands under radiation. Scientists eventually decide to abandon the virus underground.



RABID (1977)

The origin: Dr Keloid, whose trial skin-graft surgery on crash victim Rose turns her into a nympho vampire. With a highly contagious dildo poking out of her armpit. Yes, it's a Cronenberg movie.

The symptoms: One bite from Rose's malicious armpit and mutant rabies is all yours. Plus, there's plenty of put-you-off-your-dinner toothpaste gobs.

The cure: With no antidote to the epidemic, martial law cures the rabid with a well-aimed bullet. Having flung her germs about, Rose's corpse eventually exits the movie in the back of a bin-van. Classy!



TWELVE MONKEYS (1995)

The origin: A biological kill-all, created in the science lab and released by an apocalypse nut on a fatalistic world tour.

The symptoms: Symptoms? *Symptoms?* The stuff's so deadly there isn't time for symptoms.

The cure: Five billion die... Stays that way. Bruce Willis's attempts to time-hop to the past and return with a sample of the unmutated plague virus ends in tears.



OUTBREAK (1995)

The origin: An illegally imported African monkey, host to a deadly virus and relishing its monkey freedom, running around the Californian woods blissfully spreading its monkey germ death.

The symptoms: Ebola meets Lassa fever: a lungful of the airborne virus gets you blue scabs, convulsions, body sores and bleeding from the eyes and arsehole.

The cure: Dinky Dustin Hoffman locates naughty monkey, extracts the viral germ and knocks up an anti-virus. Way too easy.



OSMOSIS JONES (2001)

The origin: A dirty egg that, revoltingly, finds its way into Bill Murray's gob and unleashes Thrax (as in "An"), a repugnant virus that aims to off him in less than 48 hours.

The symptoms: While Mr Thrax uses a single pointy finger to fry Frank's cells, the disease impersonates a flu bug to avoid detection. So there's lots of snot involved. And farting (it is a Farrelly brothers movie after all).

The cure: White blood cell cop Osmosis Jones and cold capsule Drix, who goosechase around Frank's anatomy until they meet Thrax for a climactic biological slapdown.

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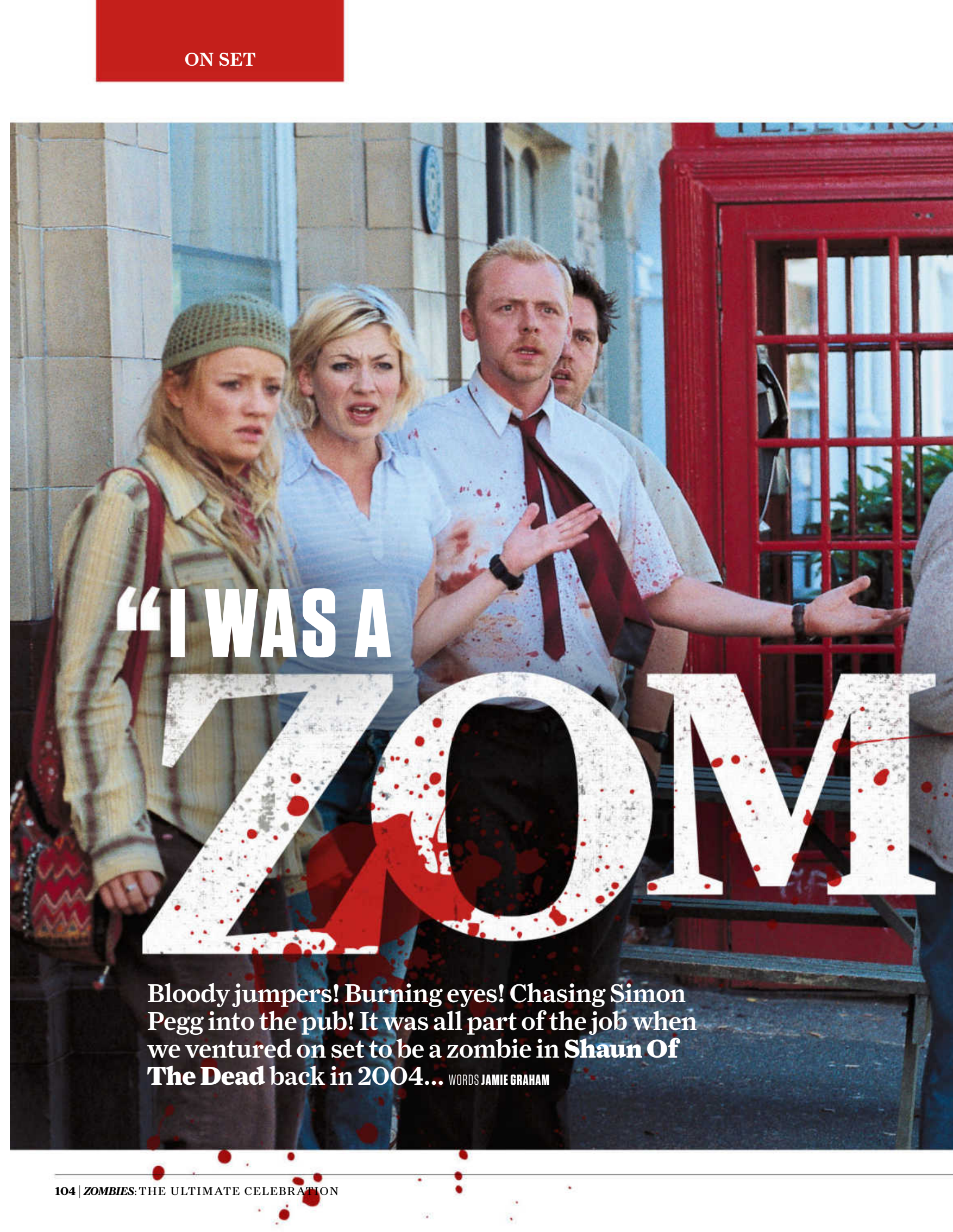
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ALL LOGOS ARE TRADEMARKS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPANIES



“I WAS A

ZOMBI

Bloody jumpers! Burning eyes! Chasing Simon Pegg into the pub! It was all part of the job when we ventured on set to be a zombie in **Shaun Of The Dead** back in 2004... WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM



Dead set (left to right): Lucy Davis, Kate Ashfield, Simon Pegg, Dylan Moran, Penelope Wilton, horror journalist Alan Jones and our very own zombie, Jamie.

o stranger to shuffling outside pubs, we lurch towards the door, arms outstretched, parched mouth cracking open in anticipation. All around, Londoners of similarly insatiable appetites mill on the pavement, jostling for prime position. The moans are

deafening, unrelenting, the anguished cry of a thousand hangovers kicking in at once.

Your average Friday night at a Soho boozery? Not quite. Substitute a hunger for alcohol and peanuts for blood and intestines, and you're getting close. Factor in the sweet stench of fake blood frying in the afternoon sun and you're almost there. And consider the wide-eyed onlookers – the inner circle comprised of film technicians, the outer ring made up of toddlers sucking thumbs, kids sucking sweets and parents sucking cigarettes – and you've got it. This is a 2003 location shoot for zombie romantic comedy *Shaun Of The Dead* and we're playing one of the undead, stumbling forwards on a single-minded mission: to get a piece of the movie's lead, co-creator Simon Pegg.

Being offered a part as a "featured zombie" sounded like a sidesplitter. Come on set for a day, get pasted in claret, eat people, go home. After years of watching George A Romero's ghouls blunder across the screen, here was a chance to join their rotting ranks. To be immortalised. Even if it was as a zombie by a phone booth...

The big day, 5am, crawling into a cab. Things suddenly seem much less amusing when you're hurtling under rain clouds towards New Cross, half asleep as the car pulls in by the town hall. Inside looks like A&E on the eve of the apocalypse. Zombies are everywhere: sprawled on the floor, sat on steps, queuing for breakfast. A guy with a caved-in skull sticks out his plate for eggs. Scrambled, of course.

First stop is Wardrobe. An assistant stares long and hard, finger on lips, sizing up the possibilities. "A-ha!" she exclaims, "I've got it!" as we're handed a jumper covered in blackened blood. "That should do it!" That should do it? Maybe it's time to get some new jeans and trainers...

Make-up. Blood in hair, blood on chin, yet more blood on jumper. Perfect. Now ready for the final touch: opaque, distinctly undead-ish, nothing-going-on-inside-bar-thoughts-of-gnawing-on-human-flesh contact lenses. Which sting like hell. It's 7.10am. It's gonna be a long day.

NOON

Cloud cover has crippled the day's shooting, the tick-tock boredom leading to rumblings of a zombie rebellion. We lead a breakaway faction to nearby pub The Winchester where the movie's *Night Of The Living Dead*-style siege climax will be set. Time to enjoy a pint while scratching at bloodshot eyes. ➔



Grub'n'guts: an extreme scene proves *Shaun Of The Dead* isn't all about the laughs...

“*Shaun Of The Dead* was a working title but it stuck”

Finally, two bits of luck. One, the ‘eye-drop lady’ appears at the door, muttering, “I’ve been looking for you everywhere,” as she dispenses pure relief into each socket. Two, a PA pops up with the news that Simon Pegg and director Edgar Wright are ready to be interviewed.

“No one’s prepared to take the blame for the title!” Pegg begins, smoothing his bright red tie over his crisp white shirt. “It was a working title that stuck, but it makes the film sound dumber than it is. Edgar and I wanted to make a horror film and a comedy, but we didn’t want to make a spoof horror – that would be taking the piss out of a genre we both love.”

Evidently. After all, they’re here talking to a journalist whose head resembles a bowl of congealed tomato soup. “We love *Braindead* and we love *Dawn Of The Dead*, but the template was *An American Werewolf In London*,” explains Pegg. “People mistake *Werewolf* for a comedy because they remember the characters’ banter and Jack’s hilariously deteriorating state. But it’s actually a very scary horror film. With some black humour in it, of course.”

Wright jumps in: “The idea came to us when we were doing the *Resident Evil* episode of our sci-fi sitcom *Spaced*,” he says. “In it, Simon’s character plays *Resident Evil* all night long and starts hallucinating. He runs around and starts shooting zombies like in a Romero set-piece. We thought, ‘Wouldn’t it be great to do a whole film like this?’”

Not that *Shaun Of The Dead* will resemble *Spaced*, mind. For while the cult TV show featured characters constructed from popular culture, the gags wrung from numerous references, this zom-com goes for more naturalistic laughs. The undead may shuffle in the background, but it’s all about the observational humour in the foreground. It is, as Wright puts it, a movie about “average people in a world of zombies, and how the zombie problem exacerbates their day-to-day sexual conflicts.”

In fact, these protagonists are so self-absorbed they frequently forget about the ‘big’ problem all around them. And they certainly don’t draw on other zombie films to get by: “As far as these guys know, there is no such thing as a zombie movie,” says Pegg. “They certainly don’t go, ‘Right, what happened in that film...’”



Gory and gross: we stalk the streets of London...

Good job too, seeing as Wright’s leading ladies – Lucy Davis (*The Office*), Penelope Wilton (*Calendar Girls*) and Kate Ashfield (*The Low Down*) – have hardly seen a horror flick between them. A gab over lunch confirms this, the actresses gamely scoffing their quiche despite being confronted by a zombie with a dictaphone. Wilton admits she had to have the script “explained”, while Ashfield reminisces how Wright screened a spliced-together videotape entitled *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Zombies But Were Afraid To Ask*.

Davis, meanwhile, connected with the intimacy and the humour. “Zombies are taking over the



Living the dream: our Jamie with fellow horror aficionado Alan Jones.

SIMON PEGG'S TOP SIX HORRORS... Shaun himself reveals his choicest chillers...



DAWN OF THE DEAD

(George A Romero, 1978)

"Romero builds masterfully on his seminal *Night Of The Living Dead*, depicting a paranoid and lawless society attempting to cope with an inexplicable zombie epidemic. It's scary, thoughtful, funny, heartwarming and tragic - sometimes, you even find yourself rooting for the zombies..."



THE EXORCIST/THE SHINING

(William Friedkin, 1973/
Stanley Kubrick, 1980)

"I'm including these as a double feature because I wanted to make room for a rogue entry. *The Exorcist* is a dizzying mix of cinematic sophistication and scrotum-shrivelling fright-bombs; *The Shining* is a sublime exercise in psychological hectoring."



THE THING

(John Carpenter, 1982)

"This was the first contemporary horror I ever saw. Hired by a friend's mum from the video library, *The Thing* filled me with dread even before the cassette hit the top-loader. A neat combination of Carpenter's slow-burn tension and Rob Bottin's benchmark body horror, the film thrills and unnerves."



AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

(John Landis, 1981)

"Another film consumed in the closed-curtained world of video-kid naughtiness. Even as a youngster, I remember recognising something distinctly classic about Landis's reworking of the lycanthropy myth - something that even went beyond Rick Baker's stunning transformation FX."



PATRICK

(Richard Franklin, 1978)

"My rogue entry. I caught this when I was a teen and it gave me a freaking. It's about a man left comatose by a trauma, who develops telekinetic powers. He has a crush on his nurse and uses his powers to ensure he remains the only man in her life. 'Patrick is ready for his hand job now.' Disturbing."

THE EVIL DEAD

(Sam Raimi, 1981)

"Like *Dawn Of The Dead*, Raimi's first feature was misinterpreted as a 'video nasty' by the moral right and banned in the early '80s. Not that it inflicted any great harm on the picture; it's a masterpiece of ingenuity, enterprise and endeavour."

world but you can still have your own ordinary enmities, your own issues with parents and partners," she muses. "*Shaun* is a zombie rom-com. It's very funny. In fact, if it wasn't for all the blood and obscenities, I could see it having the same audience appeal as *Four Weddings And A Funeral*!"

Ah yes, the blood. Determined to play the zombie element straight and scary, Wright and Pegg are heartily embracing an 18 certificate ("The moment I saw *Resident Evil* was a 15, I thought, 'This is gonna be shit,'" laughs Wright). [Although, funnily enough, *Shaun* ended up rated 15! - Ed]



They're also adamant that zombies should stalk on leaden legs. It's not a reaction to the fleet-footed blighters in Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later...* or Zack Snyder's *Dawn Of The Dead* remake - Wright and Pegg started scribbling *Shaun* four years ago - but a gut belief. "I used to look at Lucio Fulci's zombies when I was six," says Wright, "and I couldn't eat my Weetabix." Pegg grins, adding: "I loved Romero's zombies cos they were so inept and rubbish."

Back in the pub, the zombie rebellion is stirring. The bitching starts and it's back to the town hall to demand removal of contact lenses. A toilet break reveals a loo seat smeared in blood, the flush sticky to the touch.

No sooner have cigarettes been sparked than it's happening: a break in the clouds, a glint of sun, cameras ready to roll. Shit. Back to the 'contact-lens lady' and out, tears refracting, zombies multiplied as far as the (squinting) eye can see. A quick stop at a newsagent for gum garners zero surprise from the guy behind the till. "What happened to you?" he asks. "Looks nasty." Hell, it is New Cross...

"And... Action!" Tottering towards the pub door, hands grappling for Simon Pegg and his co-stars as they frantically try to make it into the pub. Lumbering past a bright red phone box, a glance inside revealing a half-devoured portion of chips and a used condom. Must have been a good night.

And you know what? This is turning out to be a good day, the numbing tedium and fiery eyeballs suddenly worth it. Our head lolls, withered lips splitting open to issue a soul-rending groan of hellish hunger. Damn, it's good to be a zombie. ☺

Shaun Of The Dead is available now on Blu-ray and DVD.



Bad Day: Ed (Nick Frost) and Shaun (Simon Pegg) face the zombie apocalypse.

CRACK OF DAWN

SHAUN OF THE DEAD | Getting from A to Z...

Edgar Wright's endlessly rewatchable 2004 zom-romcom, co-written with star Simon Pegg, packs plenty of story points into a seemingly throwaway Steadicam shot. It's a witty repeat of an earlier sequence, showing Shaun (Pegg) walking to the corner shop, wasted. Only the rest of the world's in an even worse state...



1 Hungover, Shaun wakes intending to sort his life out. But first stop is the shop. He asks best mate Ed (Nick Frost) if he wants anything. "Cornetto!" is the soon-to-be-iconic answer.



2 Shaun's North London street looks like a war zone. Shuffling wastrels wander the roads, the cars have been vandalised, a stricken man sprints past. Shaun barely registers a thing.



3 Nelson's Newsagent is in disarray: all bloody handprints and slippery floors. Our hero grabs a Diet Coke – evidence of the new, grown-up Shaun? – and a Cornetto. Nelson stirs in the back.



his Coke, with his teeth, to notice. Outside one house, a corpse lies amid pooling blood.



4 Outside, the road is full of casualties – actually zombies – but Shaun's too busy trying to open and heads back to the safety of his own home, still completely unaware.

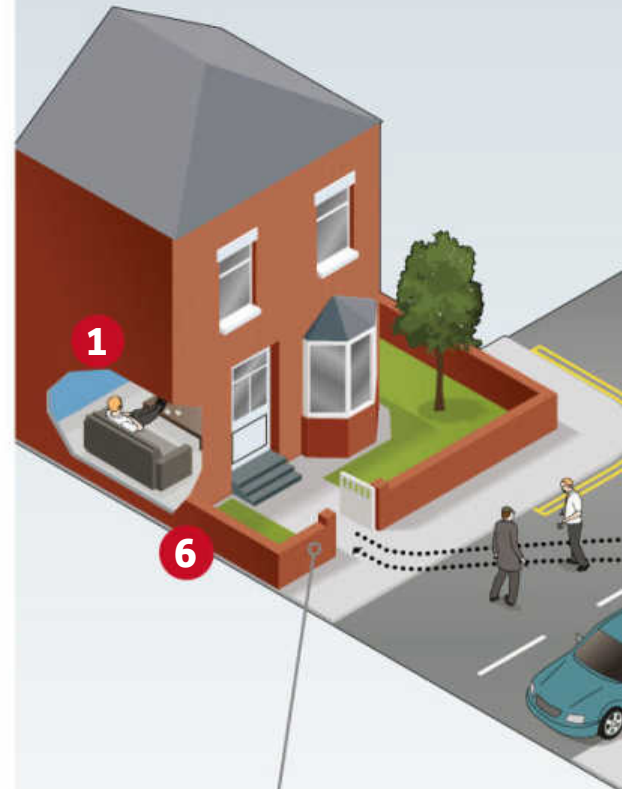


5 Accosted by what he presumes to be the local homeless guy, Shaun confesses he's got no change and heads back to the safety of his own home, still completely unaware.

6 Shaun channel hops, creating a montage of doom merchants: Sky News, Morrissey and Vernon Kaye. The words may be garbled, but the message is clear: the apocalypse is now. **MATT GLASBY**

THE CORNETTO

Shaun marked the start of Wright and Pegg's unofficial "Cornetto" trilogy. Shaun's white shirt and red tie evokes the red/strawberry Cornetto he buys. *Hot Fuzz* went for blue/original (denoting the police) and *The World's End* green/mint (suggesting aliens). Wall's were "very pleased with the namecheck".



THE SITCOM

Wright directed Pegg in TV sitcom *Spaced*, an incubator for lots of UK comedy talent. *Spaced* regulars Nick Frost, Jessica Hynes and Peter Serafinowicz have parts in *Shaun*, and the story owes much to the 'Art' episode, which sees Pegg's character hallucinating a zombie invasion after playing a certain PS2 game.

THE DIRECTOR

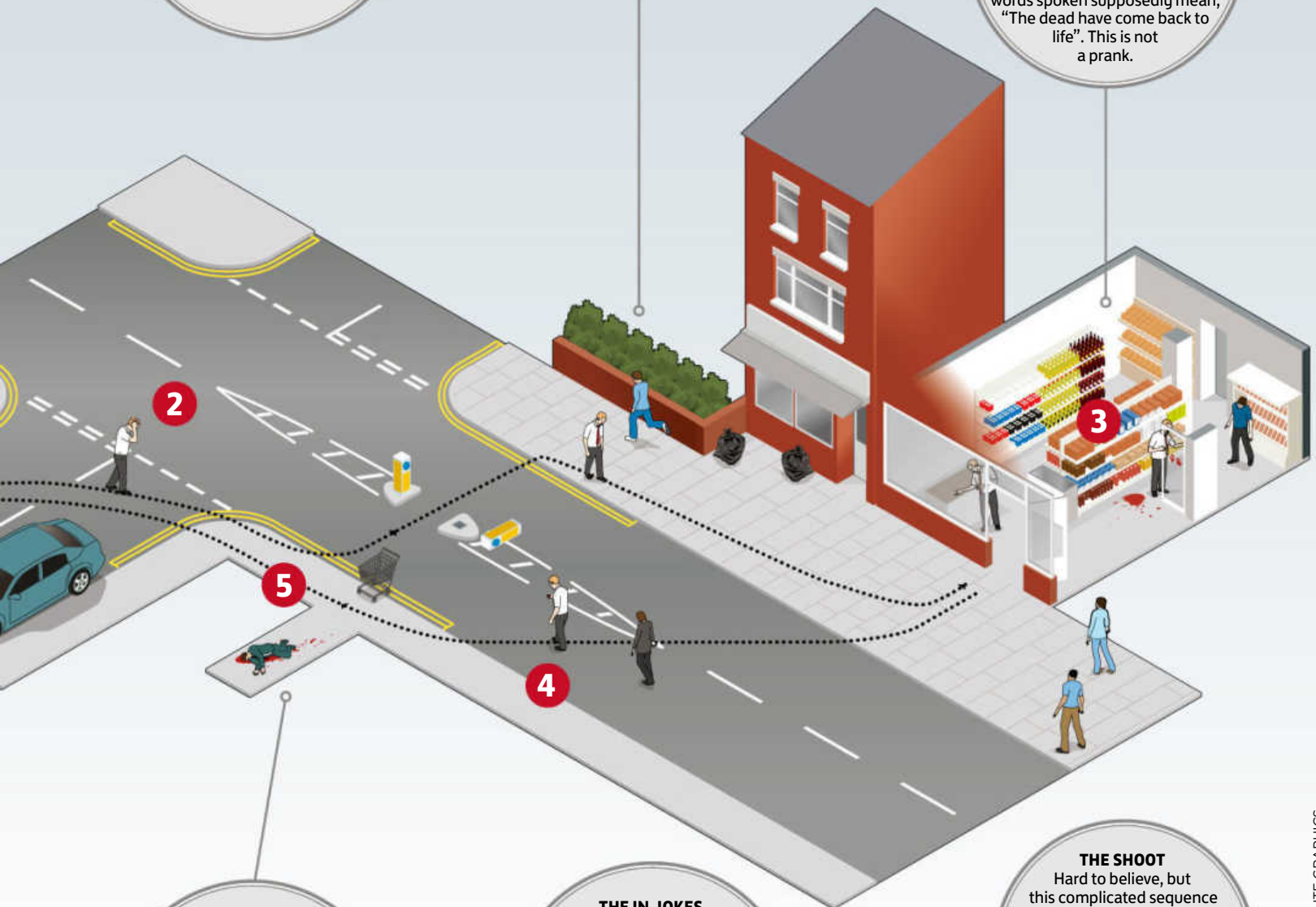
As a teenager, Edgar Wright won a Super 8 camera on kids' TV show *Going Live* (see edgarwrighthere.com). He started shooting his own mini-movies, complete with a home-made Steadicam. The inspiration for this sequence came from wandering the deserted Sunday morning streets following a *Resident Evil 2* all-nighter.

THE EXTRAS

The fleeing man is editor Chris Dickens. Although most of the extras were recruited through *Spaced* forums, the eagle-eyed will spot Chris Martin, Joe Cornish and *TF* editor-at-large Jamie Graham among later stiffes. Also, it's Mark Gatiss's voice on the nature doc Shaun watches at the end of the sequence.

THE MUSIC

Suggested songs 'Something In The Air' by Thunderclap Newman and 'We've Gotta Get Out Of This Place' by The Animals proved too expensive, so a Bollywood track plays in Nelson's shop. The Hindi words spoken supposedly mean, "The dead have come back to life". This is not a prank.



THE LENGTH

Because they couldn't find a suitable house location immediately next to a shop, Wright and co had to dream up enough on-screen gags to justify the long length of the walk. When a sniffy crew member suggested that the shot would never make the final cut, Wright resolved to make it unmissable.

THE IN-JOKES

Among the many nods to George A. Romero, the pizza place next to Nelson's is named Bub's (after a zombie from *Day Of The Dead*), and a radio in the background mentions an exploding satellite (referencing *Night Of The Living Dead*). Romero was delighted, casting Pegg and Frost as zombies in *Land Of The Dead*.

THE SHOOT

Hard to believe, but this complicated sequence was the very first shot of the movie – filmed even before the 'earlier' walk to the shops. The residents of Crouch End were just off camera, presumably waiting to walk off their own Sunday morning hangovers.

ON SET

ARMY OF

After *Shaun Of The Dead* laughed 'em up and *28 Days Later* sped them up, in 2005 **George Romero** introduced us to the fourth part of his Dead series to show us how proper zombies are done. We ventured on set...

WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM

DARWINESS

Terror from the deep: Eugene Clark's Big Daddy leads the attack on Fiddler's Green.



D

ownsview Army Base, 45 minutes north of Toronto. It's 1am on a bitterly cold December night in 2004, but you won't hear us complaining of tiredness or frostbite. Ten minutes ago, maybe, but not now. Not when the walking dead have finally begun to shamble

into view, first one and then another and another until, suddenly, they're everywhere you look, all messed up and coming to get you. Not that these are your average zombies, mind. These are \$4,000-a-night 'stunt zombies', director George Romero no longer needing to cajole friends and neighbours into dragging their feet and munching down on slippery innards. He couldn't if he wanted to, anyway, this particular scene requiring trained experts (martial artists, gymnasts, stuntmen) to appease the suits at the insurance company. Not hard to see why: the zombies lurch towards an electric fence; they grip the wire, jolting and jiving in a macabre death dance; squibs explode from chests and foreheads, red mist hanging in the air as bodies tumble. A final burst of gore arches through the night to splatter the nearby crew. We can't help regretting our decision to sneak forward to get a better view.

Cynical wags have enjoyed pointing out that *Land Of The Dead* is the fourth film in a trilogy,

previous entries being *Night Of The Living Dead* (1968), *Dawn Of The Dead* (1978) and *Day Of The Dead* (1985). Not so. Pittsburgh helmer George Romero always planned to

continue his zombie saga until he went to the grave himself, originally envisaging a movie a decade to allow himself to comment on the socio-political climate of the time. *Night* (walking dead attack farmhouse) riffed on the Vietnam war and racial conflict, shattering horror conventions as it lurched from the nonsensical to the nightmarish to the nihilistic. *Dawn* (walking dead attack shopping mall) took satiric sideswipes at our all-consuming obsession with consumerism, the zombies auto-piloting their way to the place that used to make them happy. *Day* (walking dead attack military bunker) portrayed the martial force as gung-ho bully boys at a time when Reagan's foreign policy was all about brass balls and brainless brawn. And *Land*? It's about class, race primarily, America's scarred psyche in the wake of 9/11.

"It's about opportunists living in a fortified city and making money out of being surrounded by zombies," explains Romero, peering owlishly from behind obscenely large spectacles. "You can



Tall order: gigantic George directs zombie killer Simon Baker.

call the people in the city 'Bush's America'. To me, Dennis Hopper's character, Kaufman, is trying to keep the threat at bay." Originally penned before 9/11 – various scripts have been called *Twilight Of The Dead*, *Diamond Dead* and the progenitor of *Land*, *Dead Reckoning* – Romero's fourth installment started life as an AIDS allegory. That changed when his failure to attract finance put the project on hold for several years, the '90s trickling through Romero's grasping hands before he could pass judgement on them. Sadly, frustratingly, inevitably, it took the success of a new wave of zombie movies – films inspired by the *Dead* trilogy – to sanction Romero's own return from the grave. "We were in negotiations with 20th Century Fox over the script for *Land Of The Dead* even before they released *28 Days Later*..., so creatively we weren't influenced by the zombie regeneration," says Romero of his \$15 million opus. "But I recognise that the *Resident Evil* videogames woke everyone up to a dormant genre, and that *28 Days Later*...

Don't look now:
all-action girl Slack
(Asia Argento) is
down but not out.



Defence of the realm:
Kaufman (Dennis Hopper)
protects his property
from the invading dead.

“It’s about the haves and have-nots. The zombies are blue collar Americans”

JOHN LEGUIZAMO

and *Shaun Of The Dead* added fuel to the flames. It was the success of Zack Snyder’s *Dawn Of The Dead* remake that got Mark Canton [producer] interested. He went to Universal and a deal was struck very quickly.” Romero chuckles, placing a Winston Red between his lips.

“I’m cynical enough to not think there’s any particular reason or social zeitgeist that brings people to this material. One movie becomes a hit so everyone says, ‘Let’s go make a zombie film!’”

It’s day 41 of a 42-day (well, night) shoot and

bagged tonight, one after the other, three or four takes apiece. First up is Dennis Hopper’s final contribution to the shoot, his besuited Kaufman loading a fistful of leather satchels with cash as he hastily exits a luxury tower block called Fiddler’s Green. His days of sipping fine whiskey and smoking smooth, oversized stogies are over, the undead having finally gained access to his ‘impregnable’ fortress. Hopper stuffs the bags with moolah plucked from a giant vault, tucks a silver revolver into his belt and exits, jittery and

wild-eyed. He returns to warm applause, shaking Romero’s hand as he says his goodbyes (“Thanks a lot guys, it was a wonderful experience”).

Walking away for good, he blithely tramples over the spotless green carpet that the effects crew have been jealously guarding all night. Talk about leaving your mark. Next up are Simon Baker (*The Mentalist*) and Robert Joy (*The Dark Half*). Baker plays Riley, leader of a group of mercenaries who venture into the outside world to gather supplies for the privileged folk of Fiddler’s Green. Joy’s Charlie is his loyal companion, a sharpshooter who’d give his life to save Riley’s. They normally take to the outside world in the Dead Reckoning, a 75ft armoured bus equipped with machine guns, but today they’re on foot, walking up a flight of steps in front of a greenscreen. Collars turned up and guns strapped to legs, they wordlessly survey a ravaged cityscape that will →

GRAVE DEVELOPMENTS

How Romero's zombies evolved...



NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

Fresh from the grave, these guys are blank-eyed and brain dead. They gravitate towards a farmhouse to get at the food (humans) within, proving handy at disassembling DIY defences. Terrible table manners.



DAWN OF THE DEAD

Something's a-stirring behind those glazed peepers, the dead walking their way to the local shopping mall. "Instinct... memory... this was an important place in their lives," observes a horrified survivor.



DAY OF THE DEAD

One zombie manages to fire a gun while another – fan-favourite Bub – is being taught to read Stephen King and listen to a Walkman. No different to your average teenager, really.



LAND OF THE DEAD

Big Daddy plays Spartacus to the masses, arming his shambling followers and leading them on a revolution. He even teaches them to swim. "They're trying to be us, pretending to be alive!" says a shocked onlooker.



DIARY OF THE DEAD

Not actually a sequel to the first four (but existing within the same world) *Diary* is about tech evolution – a found footage film with bloggers the final channel of communication. It's not great.



SURVIVAL OF THE DEAD

Survivors on an island attempt to find a cure for their zombie loved ones – by the end of the movie there's some hope for the undead – they get so hungry they discover they could literally eat a horse.



Wet'n'wild: a crowd of cold, soaked extras suffer for their art.



Smile, please: *Shaun Of The Dead* boys Simon Pegg and Edgar Wright get zombied-up.

be added later. We ask Baker what his motivation is. The 35-year-old Aussie breaks into a huge grin: "To get up the fucking stairs and get it fucking done, mate." The final shot of the night sees John Leguizamo's Cholo – Riley's right-hand man – prepare to enter Fiddler's Green when he hears screaming. He bursts into an apartment to find a hysterical woman staring out of the window. Her husband hangs in a tree. Leguizamo puts a hand over her mouth and whispers calming words. Romero, meanwhile, eases himself off a stool: "Cut. That was great."

CASTING FOR COMPLIMENTS

The Marriott Hotel, downtown Toronto. We tuck into a lunchtime buffet like a zombie attacking ripe intestines. Key cast members enter the room and load up their plates, the exact same grin spread across their faces. None of them can quite believe that they're one day away from finishing a zombie movie with George Romero, the guy who practically invented the genre. "*Night Of The Living Dead* is my favourite scary, freak-me-out, cool movie ever!" gushes Leguizamo at 100mph. "That was how I first ever learnt about zombies – it was like watching a documentary! But George also has a sense of humour. He puts politics in the mix and a social commentary. I dig his movies so I aggressively went after this film. I cut my salary in half. I loved the complexity of the script. These are real characters, not just stupid teenagers at a party who get knifed. My character is full of self-hate. There are racial

undercurrents. The movie is apocalyptic, an action film, a character study. It's about the haves and have nots. Dennis is living in power and the zombies are the blue-collar, red states in America." Hopper, a Republican, doesn't see Kaufman as a Bush-type figure, swerving the politics by saying, "It's George's vision; I don't know how this will end up looking, but he does." He strokes his goatee beard before pointing out that *Night Of The Living Dead*, like his own *Easy Rider*, is an "historic film full of political references". Both movies were released in the late '60s, a happy coincidence that forged a bond between the tyro directors. "Kaufman runs everything," Hopper continues, gingerly conceding that politics do play a part.

"He built the city, put up the fences, paid the army to protect it. Those living outside Fiddler's Green aren't doing so well!" (Kaufman rules this world, one character saying, "If you can drink it, fuck it, gamble it or shoot it up, it belongs to him.") Asia Argento also enjoys a shared history with Romero, her horror icon dad, Dario, helping to finance and produce *Dawn*. A spiky, spirited

“We’ve come up with great stuff involving intestines and torn flesh. I won’t let this be soft and fuzzy”

GEORGE ROMERO



The killer elite: Riley (Simon Baker) and righthand man Cholo (John Leguizamo) in front of the *Dead Reckoning*...

actress, she was always Romero's first choice for Slack, the soldier-turned-hooker who teams up with Riley and Cholo to kick zombie butt. "I first saw *Dawn Of The Dead* when I was seven and I first met George when I was 13," she says. "I was very happy to do this. I'm a huge fan of the genre he's created." We're introduced to Slack as she's being thrown to a pair of caged zombies in front of a baying, betting crowd – a makeshift gladiator in fishnets. Argento laughs. "It might seem a little crazy but I loved it! I got to freshen-up my kung fu skills! Besides, being on a horror film set with bodies and blood seems like home to me." Unlike the others, Baker needed a little persuading to saddle up. "I wasn't familiar with the genre so my manager was saying, 'Please meet George!' I did, and he was lovely, warm, self-effacing. Then I watched his films, which I found interesting. They worked on several levels. It was the same with *Land*: the script was subversive. I mean, it's not like we're making *Wag The Dog* here – it's a zombie movie – but we do fuck around with ideas and make a nod here and there. The audience can take away what they want."

DEAD CANNES WALKING

Cannes Film Festival, 14 May 2005. Romero is enjoying a post-lunch smoke on the terrace of the Miramar Hotel. We have spent the morning

catching up with Hopper, Leguizamo and Baker, but it's the director who most deserves a backslap: *Land Of The Dead*'s opening 20 minutes have been screened and applauded, critics left buzzing by the layered characters, knotty relationships, full-blooded action-sequences and downbeat atmosphere. It seems that Romero might just have pulled it off, *Land* shaping up as a worthy addition to the series. ("Quadrilogy sounds very bad," bumbles Leguizamo excitedly. "There's gotta be a better word. Quatru? Nah, that's shit.") Romero looks considerably brighter and more relaxed than five months ago, his giant frame now erected to its full height (6'4") and his brow markedly less crinkled. Taking his good mood as a green light to screech forward with a busload of tricky questions, we ask the thorny posers that have been worrying fans across the world. How can you take the zombie saga away from Pittsburgh? "Pittsburgh is still the story location. I wanted it to happen there but they couldn't match the financial benefits of shooting in Toronto. Still, it really didn't matter. All I missed were my dogs!" Why didn't Tom Savini return on make-up duties? "I would have asked him had it been possible but he's concentrating on his acting career right now. But our make-up supervisor is Greg Nicotero, a Pittsburgher who worked for Tom on *Day Of The Dead*. His

company, KNB EFX Group Inc, has the greatest reputation going [they worked on *Kill Bill* and *War Of The Worlds*]. Trust me, Tom and I are still great buddies. He cameos in the picture as a machete wielding zombie!" You've cast *Shaun Of The Dead*'s Simon Pegg and Edgar Wright as zombies. Won't it snap viewers out of the action? "I don't think it'll stop the film dead because I'm not sure anyone will recognise them. They're all zombied-up and their appearance acts as a curtain-raiser to absolute mayhem. I loved their movie so I wanted them in mine." This is the first *Dead* movie where the hero isn't black... "That's because the lead zombie, Big Daddy [Eugene Clark], is black. He's the real hero of the movie because he's the only innocent character. My zombies will always be slow – they're decomposing, bits are dropping off – but they're evolving, learning to act like humans again. Big Daddy leads them and gets them all mobilised." Mark Canton is adamant that *Land* will be rated 'R'. Your zombie pics are renowned for pushing the boundaries of gore... "Don't worry, Greg Nicotero's come up with some great stuff involving bites, torn flesh and intestines! I won't let it be soft and fuzzy. But frightening audiences is really all about the story and characters. You have to allow viewers to suspend disbelief if you want to scare them."

Two Winston Reds into our quickfire interrogation, Romero breaks his off to hug his daughter. She's just got back from boarding school so he's understandably made up to see her – especially in Cannes, so far from his beloved Pittsburgh. He hands us his home telephone number to continue our chat the following week, but there's really only one question we want to ask: will the quartet/quadrilogy/quadru turn into a quin... or whatever the hell you wanna call it? "Definitely. This one has a throughline that can progress. For the first time ever, I have left myself the opportunity to carry on with some of the same characters – both zombies and humans." He kept his word too, following *Land Of The Dead* with *Diary Of The Dead*, then *Survival Of The Dead*, and is now in development with his comic book mini-series *Empire Of The Dead* due to be turned into a TV show. Romero has always been dead sure about his zombie loyalties. "I can't imagine doing anything else, so I'll keep making these movies. Who knows, maybe I'll even return from the grave to make one. Then I'll know what it's really like..." ☠

Land Of The Dead is available on DVD and Blu-ray.

Just another ordinary day
out in East London then...





I WALKED AS A ZOMBIE

What's it like to spend a day as one of the undead? In 2012, **Ian Berriman** went on the set of British zom-com **Cockneys Vs Zombies...**

A deserted London street. A lone, grey-faced figure shambles into view, emitting an unearthly groaning. Has some terrible apocalyptic scenario engulfed the city? Er, no, that's just me actually – six o'clock in the morning is alien territory for journalists. I'm on my way to spend the day as a zombie extra on *Cockneys Vs Zombies*, a new British horror comedy toplining Michelle Ryan. The former *EastEnders* plays one of a group of criminals whose bank job suffers a minor setback when a zombie apocalypse breaks out. That's where I come in.

06.50 Some of those lined up at the crew's UNIT base (an encampment of trailers in the shadow of Canary Wharf) are "featured zombies". They're led away to be kitted out as, say, a traffic warden. I feel a twinge of envy when one returns clutching a saxophone. Meanwhile, the rest of us are given a once-over to check that our clothes are appropriate. "Are you okay to get blood on this?" I'm asked. Hell, yeah!

07.10 We board a mini-bus and are driven to an internet café/community centre in the Isle Of Dogs. Here we learn that although everyone volunteered hoping to be zombieified, many will instead play fleeing pedestrians. I feel a degree of sympathy toward those selected for this "lesser role". But

mostly smugness that I'm not one of them.

07.24 There are four stages to my make-up. First, my face is sponged with a green tinge to damp down the red tones of healthy flesh. Second comes a layer of grey "corpse flesh" make-up. Next, a glob of goo's applied to my forehead and sculpted to create a wound. The blood (which smells like TCP) comes last: some dripping from the scar, more smeared about my mouth, and a final spattering with a toothbrush (how very Tony Hart). As this goes on, there's a short "how to be a zombie" instructional video to watch. The main tip I pick up concerns an authentic zombie walk. The key, apparently, is to "lift your legs from the hips and work the glutes".

GETTING INTO CHARACTER

07.44 I'm being groped by an attractive young lady wearing surgical gloves, and money hasn't even exchanged hands. I'm outside, having my clothes daubed with blood. The make-up assistant squeezes it out of a washing-up liquid bottle (ironically, since I've never looked less Morning Fresh) and randomly grabs... Ow! That's my moob! I'm asked to "make lunges" as more blood's applied. Hmm, maybe there's a gap in the market for a work-out video here?

08.01 I'm already *desperate* to lick my lips. Argh. →



Could be *Cockneys Vs Zombies*.
Could be just another London riot.

08.25 Time for zombie school. A choreographer reminds us to keep our jaws loose and our limbs limp, and drills us to let gravity do most of the work when it comes to moving: fall forwards, stumble, gather yourself up, and repeat.

08.39 We walk down to the location, Strattondale Street, where the local library's been transformed into the appropriately named Phoenix bank. A scene of carnage greets us. A half-eaten corpse lies in the road, trailing intestines. A crashed car pins a dummy body to a tree. A ripped-off arm clutches a hamburger. Market stalls have been trashed, and a crew member is smearing the boot of a police car with blood from a bucket. "I'm a northerner: this is just an average Saturday night," shrugs a fellow extra.

I have to stagger forward past the half-eaten corpse and between two cars, without slipping on fake blood or tripping over the detritus

08.55 Our first task involves all the extras – or "SAs" (short for "supporting artistes"), as our handlers call us. A vague blur of panicking humanity is required, so we run past the camera, screaming our heads off... then tear back in the opposite direction. It's the best fun I've had since I retired from British Bulldogs.

One extra, receiving no instruction to stop, just keeps going. Her energy's so infectious that director Matthias Hoene joins in, doing a *Starsky And Hutch* roll over the back of a car.

09.20 A shot's set up of a struggling copper being dragged off the boot of a police vehicle by a pair of zombies. "I didn't hit you, did I?" the officer politely enquires afterwards.

09.26 Leaning against a bollard, I discover that it's just set dressing – a lightweight prop – by nearly falling flat on my arse.

09.54 *Cockneys Vs Zombies* writer James Moran (who also penned *Severance*) is among our number, made-up for a cameo. I observe as the undead Moran takes out a pedestrian, tipping them both over a garden

sadly I keep flinching as the lens wrangler tries to slide them in, so eventually we have to give up. I feel less of a man – until the next three volunteers prove to be equally squeamish. Phew.

10.34 Having shot some cutaways, work commences on the meat of today's scenes. The robbers exit the bank, discovering the chaos outside. Firing at the zombies, they dash to their get-away van. There are all manner of gory details. In front of me, a zombie sits on the roof of a car, chewing on a leg. Sliding off onto the ground, he drags himself along the floor in pursuit. To my right, an undead cop hauls down a fleeing pedestrian as he shins over a fence.

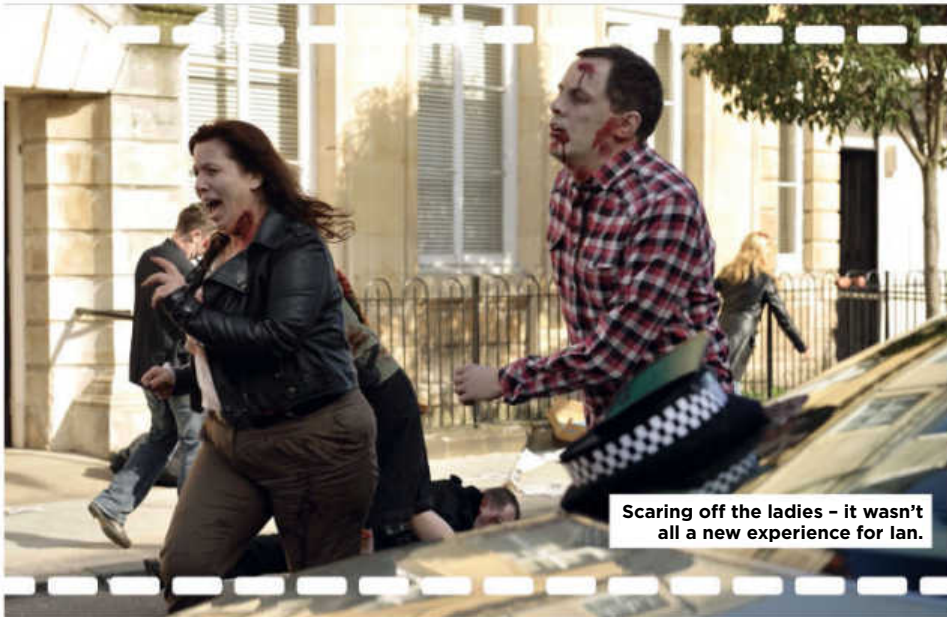
STAGGERING INTO ACTION

11.01 I'm called forward for a scene that'll be rehearsed and shot from various perspectives what'll eventually seem like a thousand times. I start at the end of the road, and have to stagger forward past the half-eaten corpse and between two cars, without slipping on fake blood or tripping over detritus. I have two zombie cops and two zombie pedestrians (one of whom has a *serious* beer belly!) staggering in front of me, and another trailing in my wake.

11.05 By the end of the first take I have a sheet of newspaper and a carrier bag glued to my foot by fake blood. One cop points out that, since I bumped into him, I may have to do so on every take. Oh shit,



Ian before having his make-up done
Sorry, having his make-up done.



Scaring off the ladies – it wasn't
all a new experience for Ian.

really? Maybe they won't use that one...

11.17 Problem: as a zombie, you can't glance around. As a result, a couple of us keep over-taking the cops, because it's hard to judge how close we are. It probably looks like I'm trying to hog the limelight.

11.20 A group of primary school children gather across the street. I give them a friendly wave. "See, he's not real!" says their teacher. It takes all my reserves of self-control not to traumatised them with a blood-curdling roar.

11.22 My left foot already aches from dragging it along the floor. I'm also regretting deciding to have my head lolling to one side in a tribute to Flyboy from *Dawn Of The Dead*, my favourite zombie – it's giving me a serious crick in the neck.

11.25 The beer-bellied zombie picks up a severed arm. "Anyone need a hand?" he asks, then proceeds to use it as a back-scratcher.

11.47 It's a scorcher of a day – just the sort where you don't want to be standing in the street for hours on end – and my fake blood is drying out, so a make-up

assistant freshens it up. Michelle Ryan and co have umbrellas to shelter beneath, but not us plebs. I'm grateful I'm not one of the armed-response cops, sweltering in a uniform and bullet-proof vest.

12.00 We switch to another set-up. This requires a couple of crew to be stationed to stop passers-by wandering through the back of shot. The trick, I'm told, is to be assertive: "Don't be meek or apologetic, and stand up straight." It also helps to wear a hi-vis vest – people just assume you're someone official!

12.34 We go again, from closer, this time shambling right up to the van. I'm really getting into my guttural zombie growl now, adding a sore throat to the day's list of ailments.

12.43 The maxim that filmmaking is mostly standing around waiting is starting to ring true. It's difficult to relax when you have to be by your mark, ready for action. There's not much you can do, beyond sit on the concrete and read one of the week-old copies of the *Camden Gazette* blowing about the street. I amuse myself with a bit of zombie tap-dance.



13.07 The crew move to film a moment where one of the gang headbutts the zombie traffic warden as they climb into the van. This provides a welcome chance to chat with the other SAs. It turns out that being an extra is a great way to meet interesting, creative people – the zombie behind me is a sci-fi artist, while fence-climber and knocked-over-wall-guy are writing a sitcom together.

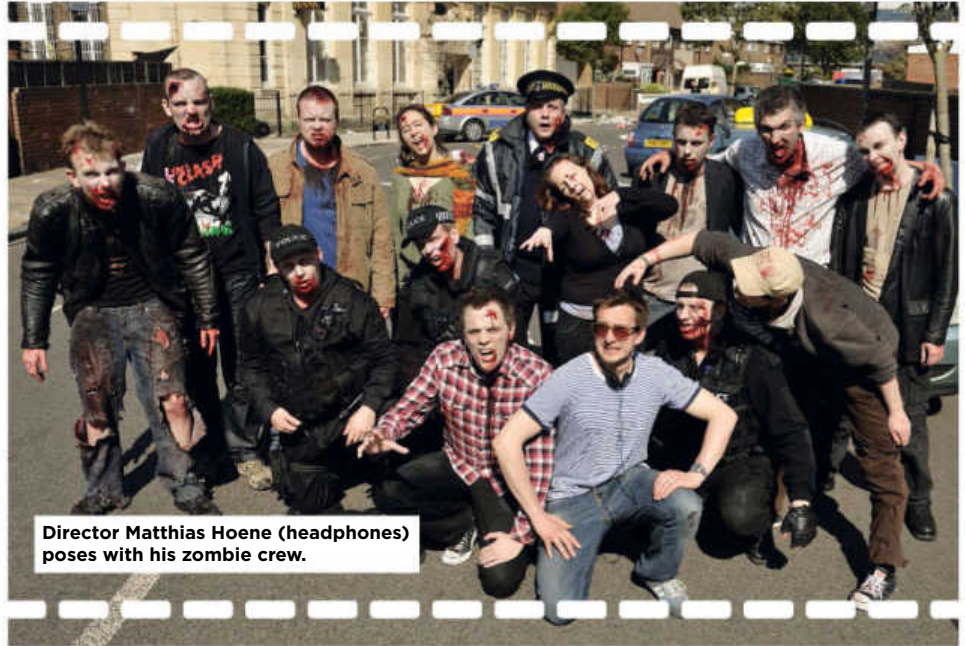
AN EXTRA'S LIFE

13.27 Back to my mark. We zombies now have to contend with fleeing pedestrians, and smoke machines pumping out what *hopefully* aren't carcinogenic fumes. The black stuff issuing from a silver cylinder is worst – it smells like a bonfire of every rubber tyre in the world. Hang on, though... we didn't have smoke before, so where's the continuity here? Realisation dawns that I may have been giving it my all earlier just to give the cast something to react to. It's not altogether clear – as an SA, the crew's focus is elsewhere, so you're often left in the dark.

13.46 As panicking humans run past, I remember the instructional video: turn slowly towards the prey, swing your arm loosely from the shoulder, then grip like a vice. I feel positively triumphant when I manage to grab someone. The extra in question, Sally, has some unusual motivation for being here: zombie films "absolutely freak her out", so she's using today to help get over her fear!

14.00 We break for lunch. Back at the unit base, blood-drenched extras tuck into plates of paella, or stretch out on the stunt arranger's crash mats to work on their tans. One sunbather's using a huge lump of foam as a head-rest. He looks slimmer than I remembered... I suddenly realise that the "fat zombie" has been wearing a fake silicone belly all this time!

15.30 Back in position. As onlookers gather, it's a little like being in *The Birds*. It starts with three gawpers, but next time you turn around there are 50. Little kids in particular love it. One high-pitched voice keeps yelling, "I love zombies!" Some of their elders are more confused. "Has there been an accident?" asks one concerned old lady. →



Director Matthias Hoene (headphones) poses with his zombie crew.

16.30 Big-belly-zombie's gut is switched for one featuring hanging flaps of skin, and loaded with gore for a shot where he struggles to his feet after being shot. "What happened to you?" asks a curious passer-by. "Bad curry!" he quips.

16.45 "Zombies on their first positions!" comes the cry. Trouble is, after lumbering down the road from numerous starting points, what constitutes "first positions" is increasingly unclear. Unlike the actors, the SAs don't get marks chalked on the ground. Instead, we have to work out our own system. I've decided my mark for this take is "level with that Timotei bottle by the kerb".

16.49 "Somebody shoot that dog!" a crew member shouts as a barking canine delays another take. I'm not 100% sure he's joking.

ACTORS VS SQUIRRELS

16.59 East London squirrels are *hardcore*. One is sneaking up on the half-eaten corpse. Having decided the carcass can't be stripped for food, the bushy-tailed intruder spends several minutes dashing about under police cars and sniffing at scattered Corn Flakes. Eventually, bounding up to the library entrance, it attracts the attention of actor (and rapper) Ashley "Bashy" Thomas... who lifts up his gun, roars, and chases it down the street!

17.45 I've no idea how much of my thespian genius was captured this morning, but I should definitely be visible in the takes we're doing now – well, if I can be seen through the dry ice. "More smoke!" screams the director, as billowing clouds pour out. "The whole point is that the zombies come through the smoke!" He rushes in to move the smoke machine nearer, furiously wafting it around.

18.03 This take's a nightmare. As I stagger past the half-eaten corpse, a huge lump of guts sticks to the bottom of my shoe. What do I do? Would a zombie scrape it off? Terrified of being the guy who ruins the take by shaking his leg, I stumble on, trying not to grimace as I swallow a mouthful of black smoke. It all seems worth it, though, when the director mutters, "Good walking, good acting." My chest swells with



After a long day's filming, Ian felt, well... like a zombie.

pride. Or is it that I need to heave?

18.23 The crew's packing equipment away, but there are still shots to get in the can. They're filming in front of the van now, as it drives off. We must stagger along behind, as we can be glimpsed through the back windows. Knowing we're barely visible, it's tempting to put in a half-arsed performance, but me and my undead brethren still give it our all. It's the arm-chewing zombie, still dragging himself along the road, that I pity. "I feel like I've crawled across half of London," he sighs.

18.49 I question the cops. One's been working occasionally as an SA for 11 years. "It's like birthdays for me," he says. "It comes around so seldom that I forget how painful it is!" Another puts our suffering into perspective by revealing that he had one of the titular roles in *The Human Centipede 2*. Imagine spending all day with your mouth stuck to someone's arse. Makes the taste of fake blood all the sweeter...

19.03 After one final stagger, during which the camera moves amongst us, spinning around, it's a wrap.

We wearily tramp back to the community centre to wash off our make-up. I discover an unexpected upside to being a zombie extra – well, for budding metrosexuals at least. "You look like you've had a facial and a spray tan!" someone declares.

19.15 My neck aches, my throat tastes of burnt rubber, my brain has been cooked by the sun, and I can barely remember how to walk like a human being. Being an extra is tougher than you might think, requiring patience, humility and stamina. The chances are that I'll only be glimpsed for a split second in the finished film, but I don't care – I'll always be able to say that I was one of the living dead. If you ever get the opportunity to join their number, sling out an undead arm, seize it, and grip like a vice. 🧟

Cockneys Vs Zombies is out now on DVD and Blu-ray.

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GEORGE ROMERO

Originally published in an issue of Total Film magazine in 1997, *Cam Winstanley* spoke to the zombie king about his original zombie trilogy *Night Of The Living Dead*, *Dawn Of The Dead* and *Day Of The Dead*.

The zombie trilogy spans three decades, from *Night Of The Living Dead* in '68 to *Day Of The Dead* in '85. Was this always the plan?

Oh, yes. Around the time I met Dario [Argento, who financed *Dawn Of The Dead*], I got this conceit where I thought, "Gee, wouldn't it be great to do one of these every decade to reflect the times and the attitudes?" So even though they're sort of a continuing story, the characters aren't the same and the personality of each film is so different that you'd never think of them as coming from the same filmmaker. That was something we were consciously trying to do.

So all that stuff in *Dawn Of The Dead* about the zombies returning to mindlessly wander the shopping mall because that's what they did when they were alive – that was part of a satire on the '70s?

Absolutely. I know the people who own that particular mall and they allowed us to film there very cheaply. Actually, when they first showed us around, they took us to where they had these sealed-off rooms upstairs packed with civil defence stuff, which they'd put there in the event of some disaster – and that's what gave me the idea. I mean, my God, here's this cathedral to consumerism, and it's also a bomb shelter just in case society crumbles! At the time, everyone was dancing to the Bee Gees, consumerism was at an all-time high, the Savings And Loans hadn't crashed... it was a weird period where everyone was saying, "Let's just enjoy this prosperity and

forget about Vietnam and that the rest of the world is turning to shit."

Did you make *Dawn* so violent to test the system and the boundaries of censorship or was it purely commercial?

It wasn't really about selling, but I was trying to push the envelope a little, because that was one of the things *Night* was credited with having done, so we were aware that *Dawn* needed to do it

“You don't buy freedom back until you're James Cameron”

too. Given that the sequel wouldn't have the same story or characters, I didn't want it to have the same feel either, so we made a little checklist of what we thought it should contain. We said: it's got to be irreverent to some degree and it's got to push the gore barrier. All of us involved were such fans of the genre that we did it gleefully. We never felt guilty; we always thought everyone else was wrong. Most of the graphic violence in the film is against zombies, which isn't as shocking as seeing a 'real' person get shot in the head... I think that's one of the reasons it got acceptance from a lot of people. Literary types were willing to forgive it by finding some intellectual reason for the gore to be shown onscreen – like the mindless consumer/mindless zombie idea. Which was great for us, of course.

After making *Martin* in 1978, you said you were panicked by the rise of the summer

blockbuster. You feared that you'd never again be able to make a million-dollar movie that would take \$5m and thus be regarded as a success. Do you still think that?

No – I'm now trying to get back to that low-budget, independent level. I've had it with the Hollywood mechanism. I mean, I've made a lot of money over there, but it's just so frustrating. You work and develop 12 things for every one you shoot. I had a deal at New Line for two years and they never shot anything I developed. Even now, I'm involved in a project that's been through 30 script drafts – at least 12 of which I've written – and is now going into its sixth year of development! The problem is, if you want to do anything that's at all unique or on the edge, you can never get it off the ground without having stars attached from the very beginning. It's very frustrating.

After *Dawn Of The Dead*, you made your first Hollywood movie, *Creepshow*, and all of a sudden you had a professional crew and major stars. How different was it, going from a budget of \$1.5m to \$7.2m?

Well, first off, on *Dawn* we were working with even less than that – maybe \$750,000 in cash. But the more money, the more problems, no matter which way you slice it. You don't buy freedom back until you become James Cameron and get an extra \$40m just because you ask. Every dollar comes with an examiner of some kind.

If you were to release *Day Of The Dead* today, how do you think audiences would react to the gore and violence?

I think we'd be stoned. It just wouldn't be acceptable. These days people would rather stare vacantly at *Mars Attacks!* than enjoy a smaller, independent film. 🍷

ROMERO BY NUMBERS

STATISTICIANS: JORDAN FARLEY/WILL SALMON



244 ZOMBIE KILLS

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD: 13 | DAWN OF THE DEAD: 53 | DAY OF THE DEAD: 17
LAND OF THE DEAD: 67 | DIARY OF THE DEAD: 26 | SURVIVAL OF THE DEAD: 68

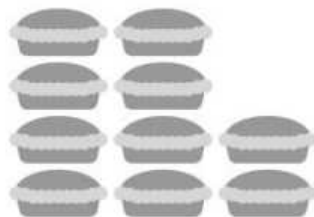
CRITERIA: CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE ON-SCREEN KILLS



CAMEOS BY SIMON PEGG

A ZOMBIE IN A PHOTO BOOTH IN LAND OF THE DEAD, AND A TELEVISION NEWSREADER IN DIARY OF THE DEAD

10 PIES



THROWN BY THE BIKER GANG IN DAWN OF THE DEAD



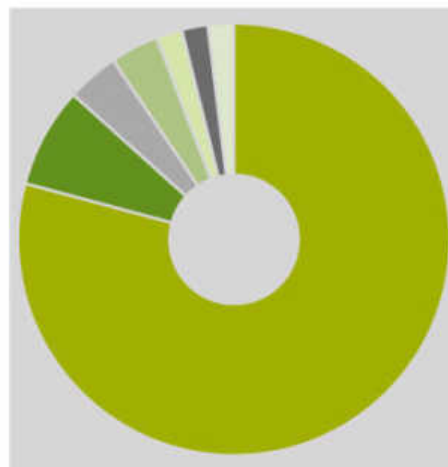
2 RUNNING ZOMBIES

THE TWO ZOMBIE KIDS IN THE AIRPORT CHART HOUSE IN DAWN OF THE DEAD ARE THE ONLY ZOMBIES SEEN TO BREAK INTO A RUN

DAY	DAY	DAY
01	02	03

3 MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DAYS IT TAKES A BITE VICTIM TO "TURN"

(ACCORDING TO PETER IN DAWN OF THE DEAD)



ZOMBIE-KILLING METHODS IN DAWN OF THE DEAD

GUN	42
TRUCK	4
MACHETE	2
GRENADES	2
HELICOPTER BLADES	1
HAMMER	1
SCREWDRIVER	1
TOTAL	53

3

CUTS OF DAWN OF THE DEAD

139 MINUTES THE "DIRECTOR'S CUT"
127 MINUTES THE THEATRICAL CUT
118 MINUTES THE DARIO ARGENTO CUT

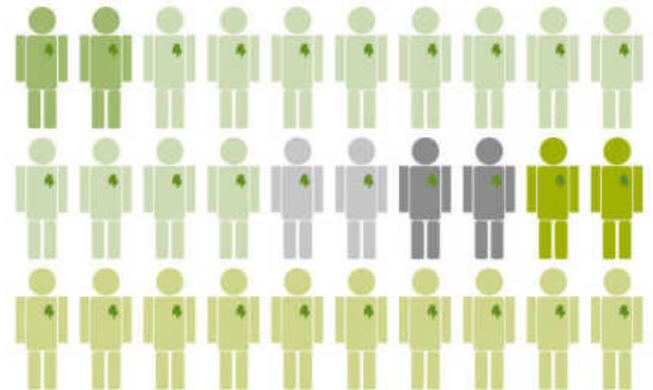


EIGHTY ZOMBIE VICTIMS

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD	7
DAWN OF THE DEAD	7
DAY OF THE DEAD	7
LAND OF THE DEAD	37
DIARY OF THE DEAD	14
SURVIVAL OF THE DEAD	8

CRITERIA: HUMANS CLEARLY KILLED, EATEN OR BITTEN ON-SCREEN BY ZOMBIES

30 HUMAN-ON-HUMAN KILLS



NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD: 2 | DAWN OF THE DEAD: 12 | DAY OF THE DEAD: 2
LAND OF THE DEAD: 2 | DIARY OF THE DEAD: 2 | SURVIVAL OF THE DEAD: 10

CRITERIA: DELIBERATE KILLINGS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN BITTEN BY ZOMBIES (ACCIDENTAL DEATHS AND "MERCY KILLINGS" EXCLUDED)

159 USES OF THE F WORD

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD: 0 | DAWN OF THE DEAD: 2 | DAY OF THE DEAD: 32
LAND OF THE DEAD: 39 | DIARY OF THE DEAD 73 | SURVIVAL OF THE DEAD: 13

CRITERIA: INCLUDES ALL DERIVATIVES AND VARIATIONS OF "FUCK" (INCLUDING "FUCKING", "FUCKED-UP", "DUMB FUCKS", ETC)

400,000:1 ESTIMATED RATIO OF ZOMBIES TO HUMANS IN DAY OF THE DEAD

TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE ZOMBIES

11 STENCHES 6 GHOULS

12 DUMB FUCKS

2 ZOMBIES* 5 DEAD HEADS

* ONCE BY PETER IN DAWN OF THE DEAD AND ONCE BY KAUFMAN IN LAND OF THE DEAD

5



CAMEOS BY GEORGE ROMERO

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD AS A REPORTER IN WASHINGTON

DAWN OF THE DEAD AS THE DIRECTOR IN THE TV STUDIO & A BIKER DRESSED AS SANTA

DAY OF THE DEAD AS A ZOMBIE PUSHING A CART DURING THE FINAL ZOMBIE FEAST

DIARY OF THE DEAD AS POLICE CHIEF ARTHUR KATZ

The Hopeful Dead?

Is our fascination with zombies really about fear and death? Or could there be something all the more positive behind our love of the horde?

R. R. Haywood, author of *The Undead*, investigates...

I write a zombie horror series, *The Undead*. (Get the plug in early.) So far there are 20 books in my series so when *Zombies: The Ultimate Celebration* got in contact asking me to do a piece on the fascination of zombies, it really got me excited. My mind went into overdrive. I sat down and considered it. I walked about my house and pondered it some more.

Then I started to fret and worry. It nagged and bothered me. I write the UK's best-selling zombie horror series, I should know this. I asked people. People I know who like zombies. "What do you like about zombies?" "Oh they're great aren't they? I love zombies." "Yeah but what? What specifically?" "Just... you know... the whole thing..." "Argh! Really not helping."

I decided to break it down and even made a bullet-point list.

1. ZOMBIES

My list was finished. I was done. Zombies are the fascination for the zombie genre. I mean, zombie movies have zombies in them. George A. Romero movies are chock full of brain-munchers. *I Am Legend* has got the scary ones in it. *28 Days Later* has the fast ones, *Shaun Of The Dead* has the funny ones, *World War Z*, *Zombieland* and about a thousand others

(including *Zombie Strippers* which I didn't know existed until I internet searched zombie movies. Seriously? *Zombie Strippers*? Mind you, it's got the bloke from *A Nightmare On Elm Street* in it) all bring a unique zombie take.

Literature is the same. You can chart from the early books to the most modern and they've all got zombies in them. My piece for *Zombies* was done.

Dear Zombie Mag,

I have given great consideration to your question and following extensive research I have deduced the following:
Zombies are the fascination for the zombie genre.

Lots of love
R. R. Haywood

Yep. Sorted. Hmmm, but the nagging thing in the back of my head was still there. People said they love the whole thing. What's that then?

The whole thing is a post-apocalyptic landscape where every decision makes the difference between living and dying. It's about

the breakdown of law and order. The rules are gone. There are no rules. Communication has ceased. You have no access to information, only what you can see and hear. It's your wits against everyone else's and all the life lessons of your existence come to this point now. Look outside. There are people out there who want to eat you. The police ain't coming. It's just you.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

We think of seminal scenes from movies. *Dawn Of The Dead* inside the shopping centre. Will Smith driving a sports car and pottering about getting a DVD then nicking stuff from dead people's houses. We think of a world frozen in time where you have access to everything you need. The DIY shops have tools and weapons. The gunsmith has shotguns and crossbows. Every shop is open. Take what you want. Have shiny new things for free. Wear anything, be anything. It's the world now but removed of all the idiots because all the idiots are now zombies that you can bash in the head without being arrested. All the people you ever hated now want to eat your brains which makes them fair game for being run over or splattered under an anvil dropped from a window.

IS THAT IT THEN? THE POST-APOCALYPTIC SETTING?

The Road by Cormac McCarthy is post-apocalyptic and it's bleak as anything. *The Book Of Eli* is very dark and *The Walking Dead* paints a desperate picture. Even my own work reflects the carnage of how such a world would be in reality. Which is the greed-fuelled angst of Black Friday happening every day but with knives, guns and sticks thrown in.

Nope, it isn't the setting. Look at the London riots or places in the world where actual law and order has been lost. It's truly terrifying.

“All the people you ever hated now want to eat your brains which makes them fair game for being run over or splattered under an anvil”

It's hope. That's what the fascination really is. It's the feeling we all have that the world is somehow dirty, broken and tainted with corruption. It's the generational belief that it will end soon and from that awfulness a new world will rise. One that is good and decent. One that has honour and nice people who actually care for one another. We'd be there too. We'd get through those darkest days and be a part of the brave new world emerging on the other side and on the way there we'd have some fun. We'll take the shiny stuff from shops and drive sports cars through deserted city streets. We'll hide in shopping centres and hotels.

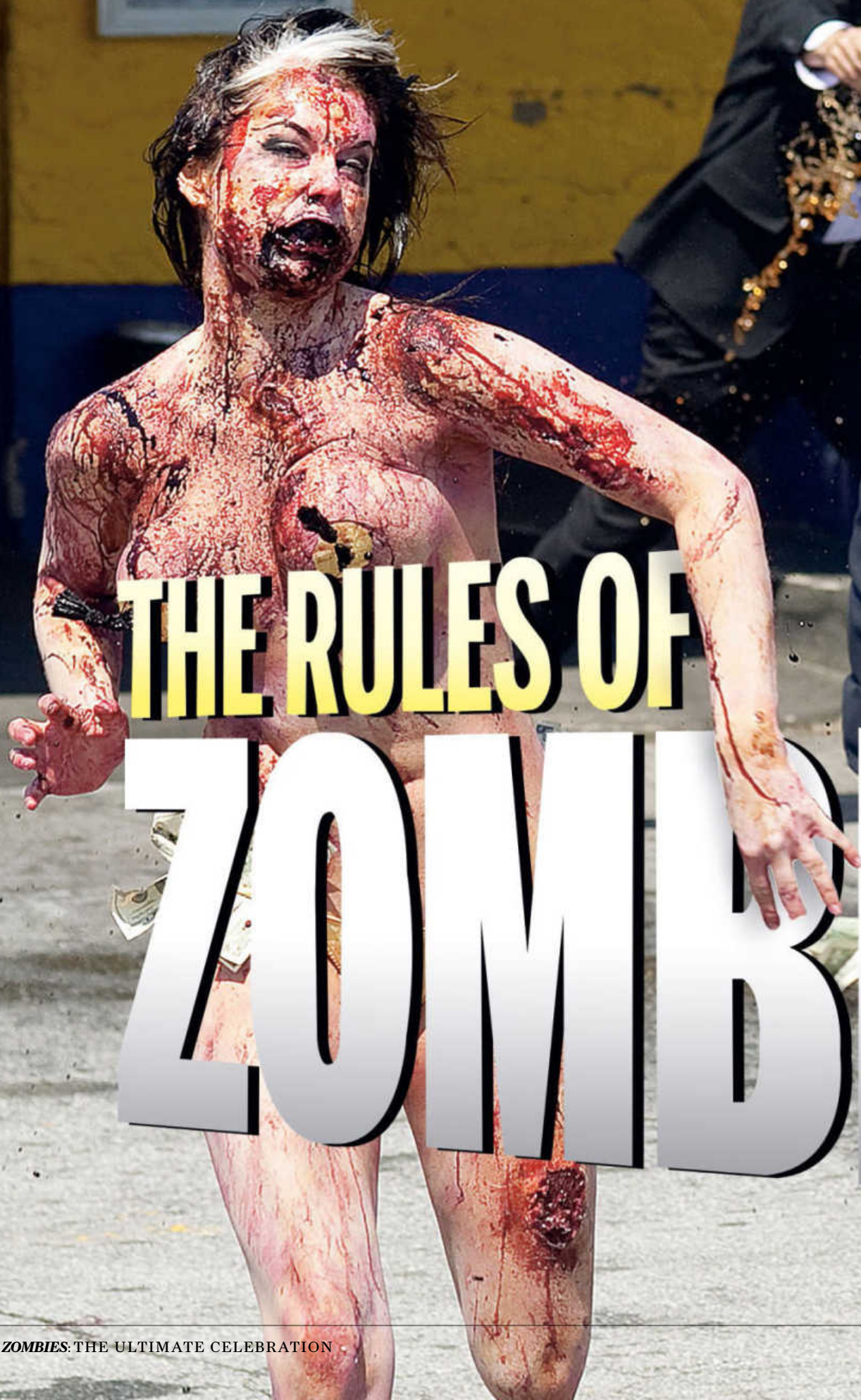
Look outside. There are brain-munching baddies out there. What will you do? You'll survive is what you will do. You'll survive because there is hope driving you on that what comes after cannot be as bad as what was there before. Surely. ☺

BIO

R. R. Haywood is the author of the bestselling self-published zombie series, **THE UNDEAD**. The novels have become a cult hit with a blend of action and trademark humour that has gained more than 2,000 top reviews on Amazon and Audible, regularly hitting the number one spot in the Horror charts.



SPOTLIGHT



THE RULES OF ZOMBIE

Zombies have been done to death, if you'll pardon the pun, but 2009's **ZOMBIELAND** felt as fresh as a newly dug grave. We spoke to Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick, the brrraaaaaiiins behind the movie, about the rules of writing an undead apocalypse...

WORDS ALI GRAY

LAND

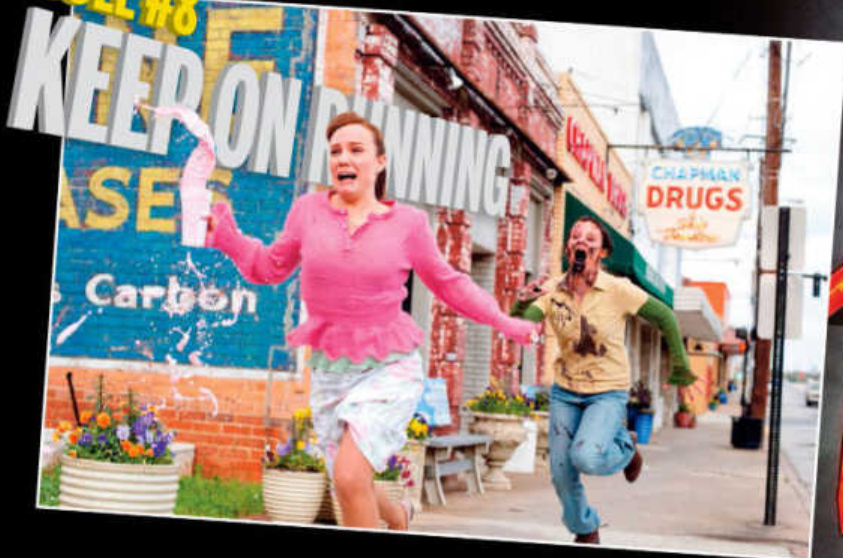
RULE #1

APOCALYPSE NOW!



RULE #8

KEEP ON RUNNING



**You want your zombies to kick some ass?
Give 'em running shoes...**

PW: We went the fast route. In *28 Days Later*, that's when a single zombie became a real kick-ass threat, so that was the inspiration. We were pushing the zombies to run as fast as each individual could, even in full make-up and in the ice-freezing cold of Atlanta, Georgia. Even the fat guys.

RR: We never wanted to do slow zombies. That would be a different creative choice. Fast zombies interested us more; it was a little fresher, and it allowed for a single zombie to be dangerous. The scene where Columbus [Jesse Eisenberg] encounters his first zombie, his next-door neighbour, 406? You couldn't have done that scene with slow zombies, it wouldn't have made any sense. Fast zombies liberated the genre and we just wanted to pick that ball up and keep running with it.



RULE #13

HAVE SOME FUN

Don't bother explaining the apocalypse – no one cares!

RHETT REESE: One of the biggest rules is not to worry too much about exposition, in terms of how people became zombies, what zombies are, what their illness is... Forget that and focus more on the fun – all these other movies have laid the groundwork. When you hear the word 'zombie' in a movie's title, you don't really need to have too much explained. There's a zombie shorthand that exists and it's best to avoid falling into the trap of explaining everything. Now's the time to throw that out the window and just put the pedal down.

PAUL WERNICK: We didn't want to start at the beginning. We didn't want to tell it in a linear way, where a general comes on TV and tells everyone to stay at home. We tried to avoid making it feel like you'd seen it all before. We really wanted to just make it freewheeling and fun.

End of the world? Turn that frown upside down!

PW: We wanted to turn the grim nature of the post-apocalypse on its head. We really wanted to paint it as a world full of wish fulfillment: this is supposed to be fun! How great would it be to be at the end of the world, and you can sleep in Bill Murray's house, and there are no lines at Disneyland? You could kill without consequence! It's the idea of the post-apocalypse being a fun world to explore, rather than "Oh my god, everyone's dead!" ...Well, we tapped into that a little bit, with Tallahassee [Woody Harrelson] and his son and Columbus [Jesse Eisenberg] and his parents, but largely we wanted to make *Zombieland* more of a horror-comedy – a funny place rather than a grim one.

ZOMBIELAND REVIEW

BY MATT GLASBY

★★★★★

Whether set in a sleepy London suburb or a subterranean missile silo, most zombie films shuffle to life at the unhurried pace of the undead. Not this one. Sprinting from the starting blocks, Ruben Fleischer's debut wittily dispenses with the apocalypse during its credit sequence, a virtuoso corpse-flinging montage of brains, bras and windshields exploding in glorious slow-mo. We then speed-date scaredy-cat survivor Columbus (*Adventureland*'s Jesse Eisenberg) who's managed to avoid becoming a "human Happy Meal" by following rules that storm the screen as captions.

As Columbus's ultra-vigilant edicts illustrate, writers Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick are extremely movie-savvy, their whipsmart script offering indispensable advice such as "Check the backseat" (rule #31) and "Don't be stingy with your bullets" (rule #4). George A. Romero would surely agree.

But you also get the sense that Columbus nursed these anxieties before the world went to hell in a handcart. He's a sweet, endearingly awkward character whose dream to find "a marriageable woman" and brush her hair behind her ear makes an amusing contrast to his new cohort, snakeskin cowboy Tallahassee (Harrelson – electric) who's "in the ass-kicking business – and business is goooooood!"

Though it's a little light on plot and jeopardy, *Zombieland*'s distinction is that it's funny throughout, often screamingly so. Besides Eisenberg's brilliant *Peep Show*-style voiceover and surreal *Scrubs*-like digressions, the cast (including Emma Stone and Abigail Breslin as a pair of con-artist sisters) are all accomplished, funny people. Meanwhile, an extended midsection trip to the Hollywood home of a Very Famous Comic Actor (no spoilers) allows said guest star to send himself up royally. "I've been watching you since I've been masturbating!" overshadows Tallahassee, with the sort of infectious enthusiasm typical of a rom-zom-com that more than earns its place in an already overcrowded field. Better than *Braindead* or *Shaun*? Nope. But make no mistake, *Zombieland* rules.

If you've got to write a zombie movie, make it a good one...

RR: Looking at how many zombie movies there are, I'm sure when everyone first heard of *Zombieland*, they thought, "Jeez, why another one?" Really, there was no good reason apart from the fact that we wanted to tell a story about people, ultimately. We thought if we could tell a story about four interesting, funny people who were colliding among each other, then the zombie setting was perfect for that. The violence and everything that comes with it was just the icing on the cake.

RULE #19

FIND A REASON WHY

RULE #21

EVERY MOVIE NEEDS A BADASS

It's Zombie Killin' 101 – you need someone to re-kill the undead...

PW: You definitely need a badass. The hero of our movie is the kid Columbus, but we did need a foil for him – a polar opposite to his wimpiness – which is how Tallahassee was born. Tallahassee was a great character but Woody made him even better. He brought a particular life to him that we couldn't have dreamed of while putting him on the page.

RULE #26

KEEP IT BLOODY

Don't skimp on the guts – choke on 'em!

PW: Gore is an essential part of every horror movie, so obviously you need the appropriate amount. What that amount is, is enough red stuff to thrill and shock the audience, but not too much – that turns them off. You write in the script 'lots of blood' then when it comes to shooting... it's *lots* of blood. You cut it together so that the gore gives you flavour, but it doesn't overwhelm you.

RULE #33

KNOW YOUR COMPETITION

If you want to survive, make friends with your neighbours...

PW: I'm a huge, huge *Shaun Of The Dead* fan, so to be mentioned in the same breath as *Shaun* is just such an honour.

RR: Different people have tried different things. *28 Days Later* has a cool explanation why these zombies are the way they are, and really, in a lot of ways, it reinvented zombies by making them fast instead of slow. We weren't necessarily making a homage to any one particular picture, or any particular series of pictures, like the films of George Romero. It's more a homage to the genre. We didn't worry too much about what's gone before, and just started the movie with people running for their lives. There are elements of previous movies in ours, but it's probably more subconscious than intentional.



RULE #39

DON'T SYMPATHISE WITH THE DEVILS

Zombies are not there to be loved – they are there to be killed!

RR: If you start sympathising with the zombies, you start to feel bad when they get eviscerated. I think good zombies should either be really scary, where you outright hate them, or they should have a cartoony, Wile E. Coyote quality, where it's fun to see them get the crap kicked out of them. It's probably best you don't think too hard about the idea that zombies used to be human beings. You don't want the audience to sympathise with them at all.

RULE #42

GAME ON!

Who said videogames were bad for your health?

RR: Videogames tend to be ultra-violent, fast-paced... You're never really sure what's coming next. We tried to make *Zombieland* in the same way and we'll continue with *Zombieland 2* to do just that. There are a lot of wonderful zombie videogames. I had to quit because I used to play too much – *Left 4 Dead* and stuff like that. When people compare *Zombieland* to a videogame, I always get a smile on my face because I take that as a huge compliment.



If there's one man going to lighten up the apocalypse, it's Bill Murray...

PW: In the first draft, the movie-star cameo was a zombified Patrick Swayze. We never got a chance to offer him the role. It went through about 10 or 12 different actors. Two days before the shoot, we had nobody. Woody knows Bill, they worked on *Kingpin* together, and called him up. Two days later he was out shooting and we were scrambling on set, writing and making it happen. It was a crazy, wild experience. We couldn't have ended up with anyone better than Bill Murray. We had a better chance of getting Bill Clinton to play this role than we did Bill Murray, because he's so selective and so difficult to get hold of. But we didn't count on his relationship with Woody, and him loving the script, and just him being absolutely brilliant.

RR: It was a wonderful surprise. All you had to do was sit in a theatre and listen to the audience reaction when people first realised 'BM' on the gates was referring to Bill Murray. It was like a wave of joy that washed over the theatre. Once I stayed with an audience and felt that, I thought, "Oh man, this is really gonna be good..."

PW: We weren't happy with casting a zombie movie with two Oscar nominees [Harrelson and Abigail Breslin], we wanted to add a third to really bring some prestige to the picture. And after we made that Twinkie joke at Russell Crowe's expense, I'm pretty sure we can cross him off the list for *Zombieland 2*...

**RULE #51
EMPLOY A FAMILIAR FACE**

**THE FINAL RULE...
ALWAYS SET UP A SEQUEL**

It's called Zombieland – you'll be wanting to explore it further...

PW: *Zombieland 2* is going to be in 3D – that's the plan at least, post-*Avatar*. It will centre on our wonderfully dysfunctional family of Columbus and Tallahassee, Wichita [Emma Stone] and Little Rock [Breslin], and there will be more adventures, more conflict and more zombies. And more fun. We haven't started writing it yet. We're sitting down with Ruben [Fleischer, director] and Gavin [Polone, producer] and the studio and we're all coming together and hashing it out creatively to a point where it feels great and there's a reason to do a sequel other than to cash in on the success of the first one. Everyone was really proud of the movie we made, and we wanna be as proud, or even more so, with *Zombieland 2*, so we're not rushing it and we're spending all the right creative time sitting down to break it.



Who else would you want looking after you when you're undead?

MAGGIE

Arnie swaps guns for hugs in zombie flick

ARNIE GOES ARTSY

1 In *Maggie*, Schwarzenegger plays it straight as Wade, a tight-lipped farmer who's forced to care for his zombie-infected daughter. "Arnold's known for his action and initially you think this script wouldn't fit him," director Henry Hobson tells us, "but there's a side of Arnold here that I don't think has ever been seen before. He came to meetings with a really strong sense of character and what he wanted to do and it blew me away. There are no catchphrases, it's purely about him being a father," he adds. "It's a very different performance for him."

HUMANITY'S BEEN TERMINATED

2 In Hobson's dystopian future, a mysterious disease has attacked all forms of life. "Whatever happened triggered the death of plant life as well as human life," says Hobson. "Electricity is running out. You can tell that something has happened that's had a knock-on effect. There's a depression and decline in the world and by shooting it in a way that highlights the beauty despite all the death, I think, makes it more

tragic," he adds. "The film captures a really interesting cinematic landscape that's very different. That was the intention."

MAGGIE'S INFECTED

3 Abigail Breslin, previously of *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Zombieland* and *Ender's Game*, plays Maggie, the titular teen on the turn. Having fallen victim to the virus, she's rescued by dad and returned home to wait out her deadly transformation. "*Maggie* is a story about a girl whose incurable disease manifests itself in this deathly way," says Hobson. "Wade's on a journey to find his daughter and bring her home but he hasn't thought about what that means for everybody else in the town. There was this naturalistic energy to what Abigail was able to bring to the screen. There's a great moment where she mocks Arnold's accent. She saw that relationship building and gave it more humanity."

IT'S AN INTIMATE AFFAIR

4 "You only very briefly glimpse the wider world and then you're

immediately taken to the smallest possible environment, which is an isolated rural area," says Hobson of Arnie, Abigail and the dying world. "Unlike other zombie projects, intimacy is something that perhaps hasn't been played on because people are still in awe of either the look or speed of the zombies, or the gore and violence," he says. "The zombie genre has the opportunity to do very personal stories and I wanted to make sure this world felt intimate and personal."

IT'S GOT BRAINS... BRAINS!

5 The zombie genre has been many places in recent years and with *Maggie*, Hobson hopes to take it to new and thoughtful levels. Certainly don't expect the slam-bang action violence that Schwarzenegger is usually associated with. "It's a powerful story and I wanted to give it that extra depth," says Hobson. "The way I looked at it was through a cinematic lens that shows the tearfulness of the emotional drama. Being able to take the well-trodden path of zombie movies and do something new with it felt interesting. There are tissues and tears and moments of gore, and a cinematic beauty to it as well."

Maggie is out now on DVD and Blu-ray.



FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

SCOUTS GUIDE TO THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

The zom-com where a trio of scouts earn their badges in creative killing

IT'S AN '80S THROWBACK

1

When it comes to modern zombie comedies there are two that stand out from the rest: *Shaun Of The Dead* and *Zombieland*. *Scouts Guide To The Zombie Apocalypse* distinguishes itself from those noughties classics by taking inspiration from a different decade entirely. "I got really excited after I read the script because it had a very '80s vibe to it, which I really was into," director Christopher Landon tells us. "I grew up on *Gremlins* and *Goonies* and *Monster Squad*, so I thought this was an opportunity to make something like that."

A FUTURE X-MAN STARS

2

Tye Sheridan, soon to be seen as a young Cyclops in *X-Men: Apocalypse*, plays Ben, best friend to fellow Boy Scouts Carter and Augie. Luckily the zom-pocalypse hits during their final camping trip. "Their relationship is the anchor of the film because the

concept is so outlandish it was really important to have a story about this friendship," Landon says. "Ben and Carter have outgrown it, but Augie doesn't want to let go of scouting. For me, that was the fun of the story – getting to see how a friendship implodes then gets rebuilt over the course of one night."

THE ZOMBIES HAVE PERSONALITY

3

Forget the faceless (sometimes literally) walkers of most undead movies, the zombies in *Scouts Guide* have their own distinct charms. "Our zombies have personalities that they've brought over from the other side," Landon says. "We had a massive list of different types: yoga-mom zombies, a zombie wearing a YOLO t-shirt..."

IT'S GOT SCARES TOO

4

The film is primarily a comedy, but having worked on the *Paranormal Activity* series Landon knows the

power of a good fright. "It was fun to be ridiculous, and it was great to not have to be found-footage!" he says. "But I always tried to keep comedy in the mix because if you're laughing with them you're going to be fearful for them later on."

THEY GET CREATIVE

5

Being a Boy Scout proves surprisingly useful at the end of days. "It was fun coming up with ways to use their skills," Landon says. "For instance, when Ben gets trapped in a jail cell he whittles a mop into a spear and uses that as a weapon. It's funny because we've had zero cooperation from the Boy Scouts of America. They hate this movie, I'm sure. But I was like, 'This is the best thing that's ever happened to them. They've had so much bad press, but we make them look cool!'"

Scouts Guide To The Zombie Apocalypse will be available on Blu-ray and DVD from Monday 7 March.



APOCALYPSE NOW!

Ever fancied fighting zombies yourself? We've rounded up a few of the many zombie experiences available throughout the country so you can live your own zombie outbreak!

THE LAST SURVIVORS

Online: thelastsurvivors.co.uk/main

Where: Brentwood, Essex

Price: £90

Set in a fully functioning secret nuclear fallout bunker, The Last Survivors throws players into a post-apocalyptic world for a real-life movie/videogame-style experience. You receive a distress call from the mysterious Outpost 16 research facility which has been overrun with the infected. You will be armed with airsoft weapons and, on location for over two hours, have to keep your nerve and use tactics and teamwork to find clues and ammo to discover the cause of the breach and escape alive!



ZOMBIE INFECTION

Online: zombieinfection.co.uk

Where: Liverpool, Leicestershire, Sheffield, Nottingham, The Wirral

Price: £60

Pick one of the atmospheric locations across the country (a psychiatric hospital, a factory, a prison, a forest and more) and you'll be trained, tooled up and sent on missions with a team of survivors. You'll be competing against other teams and armed with an airsoft weapon to protect against zombies on the lookout for brains. Plays lasts around three hours.



ZOMBIE BOOTCAMP (VIA CHILLISAUCE)

Online: chillisaUCE.co.uk/stag/birmingham/survival-horror_17642/

Where: Birmingham

Price: £95

Aimed at groups (and stag groups particularly), this is a tooled up, amped up, shoot 'em up experience. Players are trained for an hour in weaponry and combat by ex-military staff using semi-auto assault rifles, pistols, pump-action shotguns and grenades then sent out to defeat ambling hordes of the undead. It's full contact and potentially dangerous, though, so stag groups beware – no boozing allowed up to 24 hours before.



ZED EVENTS

Online: zedevents.co.uk

Where: Reading

Price: £119

Based in a disused shopping mall, this is a zombie survival event which prides itself on immersive make-up, props and special effects. The mall experience has apparently been revamped for 2016 with new, super-high-tech weaponry which allows you to shoot zombies in the head. They have a staunch no-contact policy, though, so this'll be more about your aim than your arm. Play lasts around two-and-a-half hours.



ZOMBIE BATTLE (VIA WISH)

Online: wish.co.uk/zombie-battle-london

Where: Greenwich, London

Price: £115

Head to North Greenwich, get briefed in a bunker and battle cockney zombies! Play lasts around three-and-a-half hours in underground locations and includes training in three types of weaponry and a variety of supervised missions, definitely including nobbling a horde of zombies. This one was featured in an episode of *TOWIE* apparently – whether that's a pro or a con is yours to decide.



END OF DAYS

Online: zombiesurvivalexperience.co.uk

Where: West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester

Price: £80/£99

There are two different experiences on offer here, both with a rich backstory. 'The Laboratories' allow you to witness a nutty professor attempt to create a super-being, then the more claustrophobic and intense 'The Mill' experience sees the professor's protégé attempt to find a cure. You'll be toolled up in each case of course. Play lasts up to three hours.



ZOMBIE BOOT CAMP

Online: zombiebootcamp.co.uk

Where: Worcestershire

Price: £99

Train with ex-military staff in close combat using batons and riot shields, then learn how to use a paintball gun before embarking on two missions – a close quarters riot then a 'search and destroy' mission to shoot remaining straggler zombies with your weapon. Play lasts up to four hours. Check out the site for other zombie experiences.



10 BEST ZOMBIE VIDEO GAMES

You could fill a mortuary with all the zombie shoot-'em-ups that have shambled into our living rooms over the years. But which are worth replaying? Here's our selection of the best of the brain-munching bunch...

WORDS DAVE BRADLEY

BEST FOR... STORY



The Last of Us

Purists may point out that this game is about people infected by a fungus, but it still tops charts with its *'28 Days Later* meets *The Road* vibe. You play Joel, escorting snarky teenager Ellie across a post-apocalyptic landscape. In addition to the cannibalistic hordes, the world is filled with gun-toting humans and agents of a repressive government. The creepy environment cranks up the suspense and you'll do more sneaking than fighting. It's beautiful and moving.

BEST FOR... MORAL DILEMMAS



The Walking Dead

Set in the world of the famous comics, but featuring new characters and situations, this five-installment series is one of the finest zombie stories and is co-written by screenwriter Gary Whitta (*The Book Of Eli*, this year's *Star Wars: Rogue One*). While other zombie titles have you endlessly blowing undead brains out, this point-and-click narrative tests your conscience, challenging you to make decisions affecting the lives of people you've grown to cherish. Eep.

BEST FOR... INVENTIVE WEAPONS



Dead Rising

The sheer number of undead on the screen in 2006's *Dead Rising* exploded everybody's eyeballs. And even now, with two sequels on the shelves, the original *Dead Rising* still stands out as a non-stop meatgrinder packed with over-the-top weapons crafted from the most unlikely things. You play a photojournalist documenting the apocalypse. You're trapped in a mall and as you compose your story, you need to fend off the horde with whatever comes to hand...

BEST FOR... GETTING AWAY FROM IT ALL



Dead Island

Ah, summers by the beach. This first-person adventure is set in a lush tropical resort which you can wander around and explore. Alas, it's filled with shambling corpses, each rotting vacationer just waiting to have his or her head smashed off with a baseball-bat-chainsaw-thing you've built from scrap. The emphasis is on hand-to-hand combat - firearms are rare on the island, which adds to the tension. Assembling increasingly powerful weapons is a big part of the fun.

BEST FOR... ZOMBIFYING A GAME YOU LOVED ALREADY**Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare**

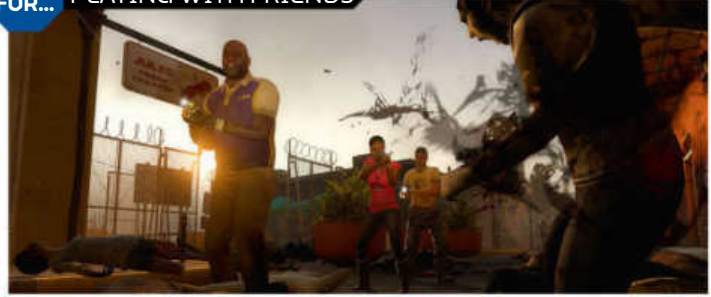
What if zombies infested the wild west? If you've enjoyed cowboy tale *Red Dead Redemption*, you can go back and convert it to a horror survival game. Although it adapts the basic game's locations, this downloadable pack is inventive enough to be considered a whole new experience, with familiar characters turned into brain-eaters. Even the animals are decayed and gross: imagine taming a zombified horse that's missing its neck meat.

BEST FOR... PLAYING WITH STRANGERS**DayZ**

As in any good post-apocalyptic drama, here the humans are as much a danger as the undead. *DayZ* is an open-world multiplayer set in a post-Soviet wasteland. There's been a plague outbreak. You scavenge for food, weapons and medicine, killing or cooperating with other survivors, all while avoiding zombies. Basics like eating and keeping warm are essential, and you can signal for help to other players online – many of whom will just try to kill and rob you.

BEST FOR... BEING A ZOMBIE**Stubbs The Zombie**

Subtitled '*Rebel Without A Pulse*', this third-person action game casts you as the titular zombie, with the primary goal of eating human brains. You've risen from your grave in 1959 to seek revenge on the American town that shunned and ultimately killed you. Scoffing grey matter not only kills your enemies but resurrects them as zombies to fight alongside you (or at least act as a shield when you're attacked). It's silly but inventive.

BEST FOR... PLAYING WITH FRIENDS**Left 4 Dead 2**

The *Left 4 Dead* series is the ultimate co-operative survival experience. It's about trying to get as many of your team members from point A to point B in one piece. And that requires teamwork. Going out as a lone Rambo-like means grizzly death, since the zombies are runners who'll come at you full tilt. The game gets doubly horrifying when a team of player-controlled super zombies joins the fray – they can plan coordinated attacks...

BEST FOR... ATMOSPHERE**Resident Evil 2**

The *Resident Evil* series began in 1996, a cinematic survival game where you have to explore and solve puzzles. The second instalment (1998) sees you helping protagonists Leon Kennedy and Claire Redfield flee the police station in Raccoon City, and its detailed environments and creepy music create a wonderfully tense ambience. Over 20 *Resident Evil* games now exist as well as the Milla Jovovich-starring movie series, plus comics, books and more.

BEST FOR... LEARNING TO TYPE?!**The Typing Of The Dead**

It seemed the craziest of ideas: Sega converted its arcade hit *House Of The Dead 2* into a speed-typing training program. But the result is brilliant, and has become something of a videogame celebrity. Instead of a gun you must rely on your keyboard, typing in the suggested word to zap away the incoming zombies. Take too long, and you're dead. It's funny, original – and surprisingly difficult. You definitely learn to type faster (while also probably having nightmares). 🎮

DEAD BOARD

Unlucky for some! Check out these 13 games of luck and strategy to terrorise any tabletop.

WORDS DAVE BRADLEY



1. Earth Reborn ⬆

Earth Reborn is set 500 years from now after a nuclear disaster. Two factions battle for control of the wasteland: human military vs the necromantic Salemites and their undead army. Each three-hour gaming session takes you through a scenario with varying types of missions (and you can build your own maps and stories for maximum replayability).

2. Zpocalypse ⬇

This post-apocalyptic game began life on Kickstarter, raising over \$200,000. Like others here it boasts a transformable board that you assemble each time. Up to four players start in a basement and earn victory points by scavenging the wasteland, killing zombies and fortifying their bases. There's a spin-off strategy game called *Defend The Burbs* set in the same universe.



3. Dead Of Winter: A Crossroads Game ⬇

Dead Of Winter tests a group's ability to work together and stay alive. The multi-award-winning game dumps two to five players in a world where most of humanity have become flesh-craving monsters. As well as helping all your buddies survive, you also have your own personal mission to complete. A packed box includes 300 cards and 30 action dice.





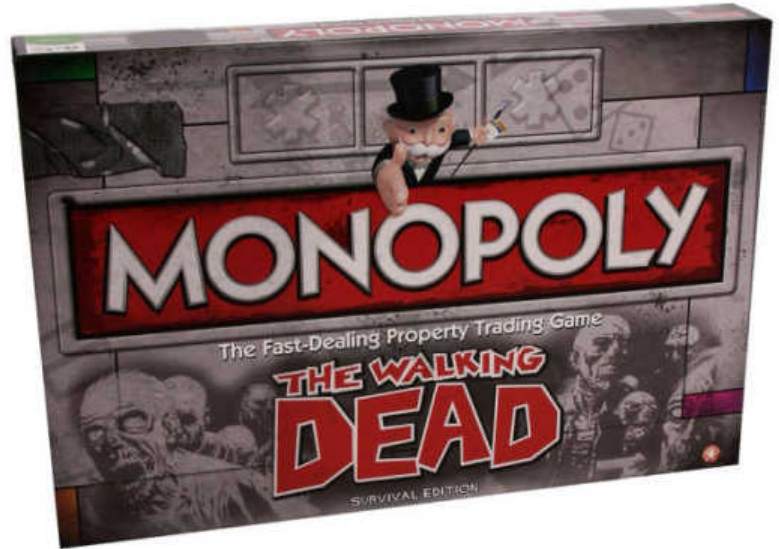
4. Last Night On Earth: The Zombie Game ⬆

A survival horror story that pits small-town heroes head-to-head with the horde. Players separate into teams, one of which will control the zombies. The board is modular, which changes the layout of the town each session. It's for two to six players, games take 90 minutes, and it can be integrated with other sets in the series like *Last Night On Earth: Timber Peak*.



6. Zombicide ⬆

A collaborative game in which up to six players each take the role of a survivor with unique abilities. Zombies are controlled by a deck of cards – and unfortunately for you and your chums, there are a whopping great load of 'em. There are ten scenarios to play on different maps made from the modular tiles, or you can create your own.



5. The Walking Dead Monopoly ⬆

Just what it sounds like: the classic board game retooled to celebrate Robert Kirkman's gory graphic novel series. Instead of Old Kent Road there's Downtown Atlanta, and instead of upgrading your properties you fortify walls. Forget the boot and the dog, playing pieces include a sheriff's hat, a katana and a baseball bat. It's a metaphor for capitalism, or something.



7. Zombie Dice ⬆

From the famous Steve Jackson Games, the studio behind countless tabletop time-hoovers like *Munchkin* and *Car Wars*, this is a speedy dice game intended for the entire family. You shake a cup containing 13 dice, some of which feature brains (you need them to win) while some represent shotguns (bad times).

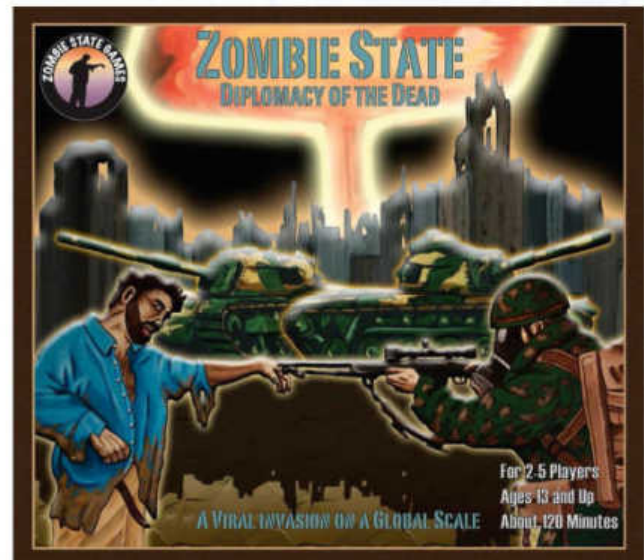
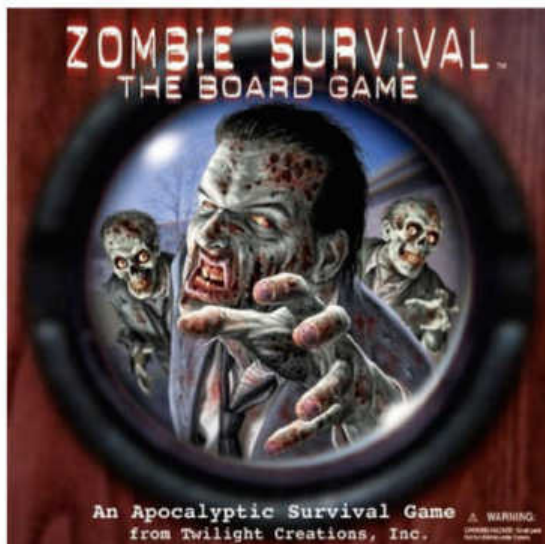


8. Zombie 15 ↩

Teenagers versus zombies! The “15” in the title refers to the supposed age of the characters and the time limit on each session. A frantic, cooperative game played against the clock, with an audio CD for atmosphere and a mystery to solve (what turned every adult into an undead flesh-eater?). It’s from publishers Iello who also make a zombie game for younger kids called, erm, *Zombie Kidz*.

9. Zombie Survival: The Board Game ⬇

Fortify your house and stand against the horde for as long as you can! Each player chooses provisions and weapons for surviving the apocalypse. But did you prepare for power outages, contaminated water and fatigue? Will you have to venture out into town for supplies? For one to four players, sessions take about 90 minutes.

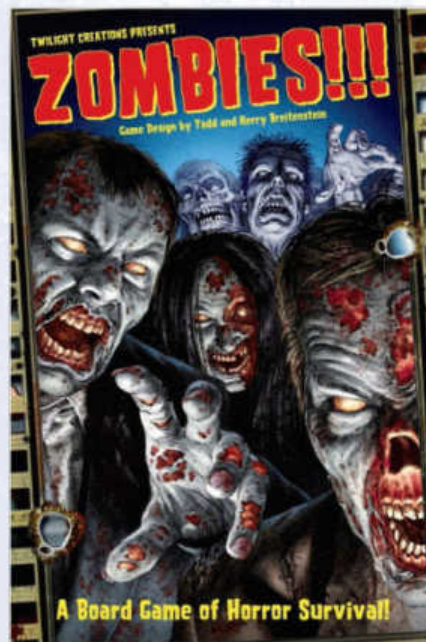


10. Zombie State: Diplomacy Of The Dead ⬆

In a welcome change from the hero survival games common to this genre, *Zombie State* casts you in the role of a whole nation. You play one of the world’s superpowers, struggling to deal with the rising numbers of undead on Earth. Played on a *Risk*-like board, you’ll gather resources, send in the tanks to fend off zombies and collaborate with your neighbours to close borders.

11. City Of Horror ⬇

Climb to the relative safety of the town water tower! Hunt for antidote syringes in the hospital! This three-to six-player game is a sequel to 2005's *Mall Of Horror* and is perfect for “friends” who enjoy backstabbing and sacrificing each other to the horde (certain actions and zombie behaviours are decided by group vote...).

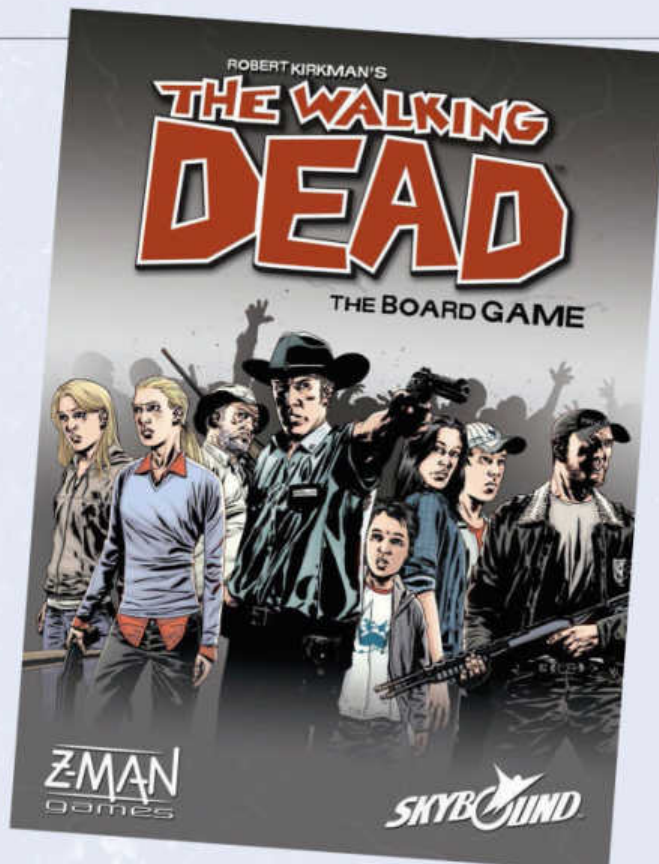


12. Zombies!!! ⬆

First released in 2001, *Zombies!!!* is famous for coming with tons of little models – there are 100 miniature dead ‘uns in the first edition. You help a group of heroes escape from a town built from tiled pieces. Inventive and well made, there are now multiple upgrade sets (one of which comes with 25 zombie clowns!) and spin-offs like *Martians!!!*.

13. Robert Kirkman's The Walking Dead: The Board Game ➡

There are multiple boardgames based on *The Walking Dead* franchise, but this one – an exploration game based on the core comics – is our favourite so far. Your characters move between locations in Georgia searching for food, survivors and gasoline. The zombies will start to follow you, and if you shoot at them you'll just attract more! 🦠



Braiiiiiiin TEASER!

TEST YOUR
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ZOMBIE QUIZ...



EASY

1 What's the name of the boozier in *Shaun Of The Dead*?

2 Danny Boyle directed *28 Days Later*. But who wrote the screenplay?

3 What zombie/animal mashup from 2014 had the tagline "you'll all be dammed!"

4 Norwegian director Tommy Wirkola made Nazi zombie movie *Dead Snow*. But what was the director's English language debut starring Gemma Arterton and Jeremy Renner?

5 *Night, Dawn, Day, Land, Diary...* name the sixth Romero 'Dead' movie.

6 Which of these foes (at time of press!) have zombies NOT be vs in the title of a film (according to IMDb)?

- A. *Strippers*
- B. *Navy Seals*
- C. *Dwarves*
- D. *Bigfoot*

7 If Woody Harrelson is Tallahassee, Emma Stone is Wichita and Jesse Eisenberg is Columbus, which American place name does Abigail Breslin's character go by in *Zombieland*?

MEDIUM

- 1 What is the name of the Scooby-Doo zombie movie?
- 2 Name all five *Resident Evil* movies!
- 3 Which zombie movie introduced the concept of eating brains?
- 4 In *Dellamorte Dellamore* what is the name of Dellamorte's weird, but kind of sweet, assistant?
- 5 Zack Snyder's 2004 remake of *Dawn Of The Dead* was almost released head-to-head with which

other zombie movie (which conceded to push back its release date by two weeks)?

6 In *World War Z* who played a doctor with the World Health Organization and is credited as "W.H.O. Doctor"?

7 What was the name of the zombie homage to *Snakes On A Plane*?

1 *The Beyond* is the second part of Lucio Fulci's 'Death Trilogy' – name the first and third parts.

2 Which of these zombie movies was NOT on the official list of 72 'video nasties'?

Zombie Flesh Eaters
Zombie Holocaust
Zombie Creeping Flesh

3 Which film was released in Spain subtitled "Tu Madre Se Ha Comido A Mi Perro" ("your mother ate my dog")?

4 In *Night Of The Living Dead* no one from the house survives. How many survive

Day Of The Dead? And who?

5 What does the 'A' stand for in George A Romero?

6 What film series has zombieified humans called 'Cranks'?

7 Which of these is NOT the title of a real zombie movie?

- A. *Poultrygeist: Night Of The Chicken Dead*
- B. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Undead*
- C. *Boy Eats Girl*
- D. *Dead And Breakfast*

HARD

- ANSWERS**
- EASY**
1. The Winchester Tavern
 2. Alex Garland
 3. Zombeavers
 4. Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters
 5. Survival Of The Dead
 6. C. Dwarves
 7. Little Rock
- MEDIUM**
1. Scooby-Doo On Zombie Island
 2. Resident Evil
 3. Resident Evil: Apocalypse
 4. Resident Evil: Extinction
 5. Resident Evil: Afterlife
 6. Resident Evil: Retribution
 7. The Return Of The Living Dead
 8. Gnaghi
 9. Shaun Of The Dead
 10. Peter Capaldi
 11. Flight Of The Living Dead
- HARD**
1. City Of The Living Dead and The House By The Cemetery
 2. Zombie Holocaust
 3. Peter Jackson's Braindead
 4. Sarah (Lori Cardille), John (Terry Alexander) and McDermott (Jarlah Conroy)
 5. Andrew
 6. The Maze Runner
 7. B. It's a real film but it contains vampires not zombies

Zombie-proof your home!

LEARN FROM THE MOVIES AND PROTECT AGAINST THE HORDES!

WORDS ROGER HADFIELD



1. BEDROOM

LIKE IN... ZOMBI 2

The only zombie that should be in your bedroom of a morning is you. Dig that exercise bike out from the mound of draped clothes and get peddling. You'll soon be fit enough to outpace the shuffling undead, no problem – just mind that broken wardrobe door! And swap your bed for a mattress on the floor to stop hidden nasties!

2. BATHROOM

LIKE IN... RESIDENT EVIL

If your house is being attacked by the reanimated, the bathroom may be where you spend much time straining in fear. So spread a wide array of beauty products around – zomboids won't be able to resist pausing to see if moisturiser will help that itchy, flaky skin. And remember to keep a shotgun by the loo – blow them away as you blow off!

3. HALLWAY

LIKE IN... NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

You may have barricaded your windows, but zombies aren't shy – they'll bust through the front door in a jiffy. So install a revolving one: the witless tomb-dodgers will fly out quicker than they broke in. And stairs? Ditch 'em. An escalator in reverse will scupper those sloth-like undead. Unless, of course, it's a zombie Thora Hird astride her stair-lift from Hell.

4. GARAGE

LIKE IN... 28 DAYS LATER...

Give that unreliable old banger the heave-ho! Invest in a black cab – they start first time, every time. Ideal for that quick getaway. Also, swap your knackered freezer for a decent generator – you don't want to be wandering around like a drunk Stevie Wonder if the lights fail. Finally, it's time to scrape off your shovel. You'll be digging those graves, baby!



5. LIVING ROOM

LIKE IN... EVIL DEAD

Reclaim your living space from the festering corpse corps! Light a roaring fire, since clumsy zombies burn easily – and you can always ruck up the rug to aid their flame-grilled demise. And keep a rack of shotguns handy: when you need to fill the moaning, staggering brain-eaters full of lead, there's nothing finer than a 12-bore thunderstick...

6. KITCHEN

LIKE IN... DAWN OF THE DEAD

Mmm, is that freshly-cooked entrails we smell? Everybody likes to snack and your average zombie is no different. A tray of brain burgers and intestine enchiladas will distract your unwanted guests long enough for you to get your tantalising body parts out of reach. Or just do a *Dawn Of The Dead* on the smelly creatures – give 'em a custard pie in the puss.

THE UNDEAD

THE FIRST SEVEN DAYS

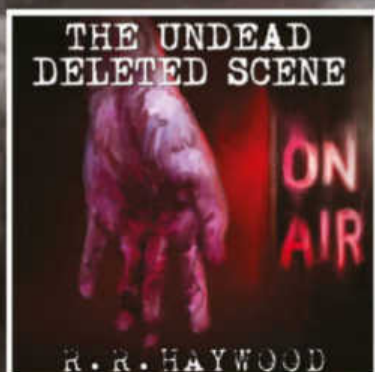
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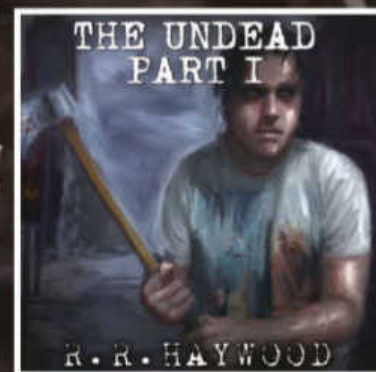
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